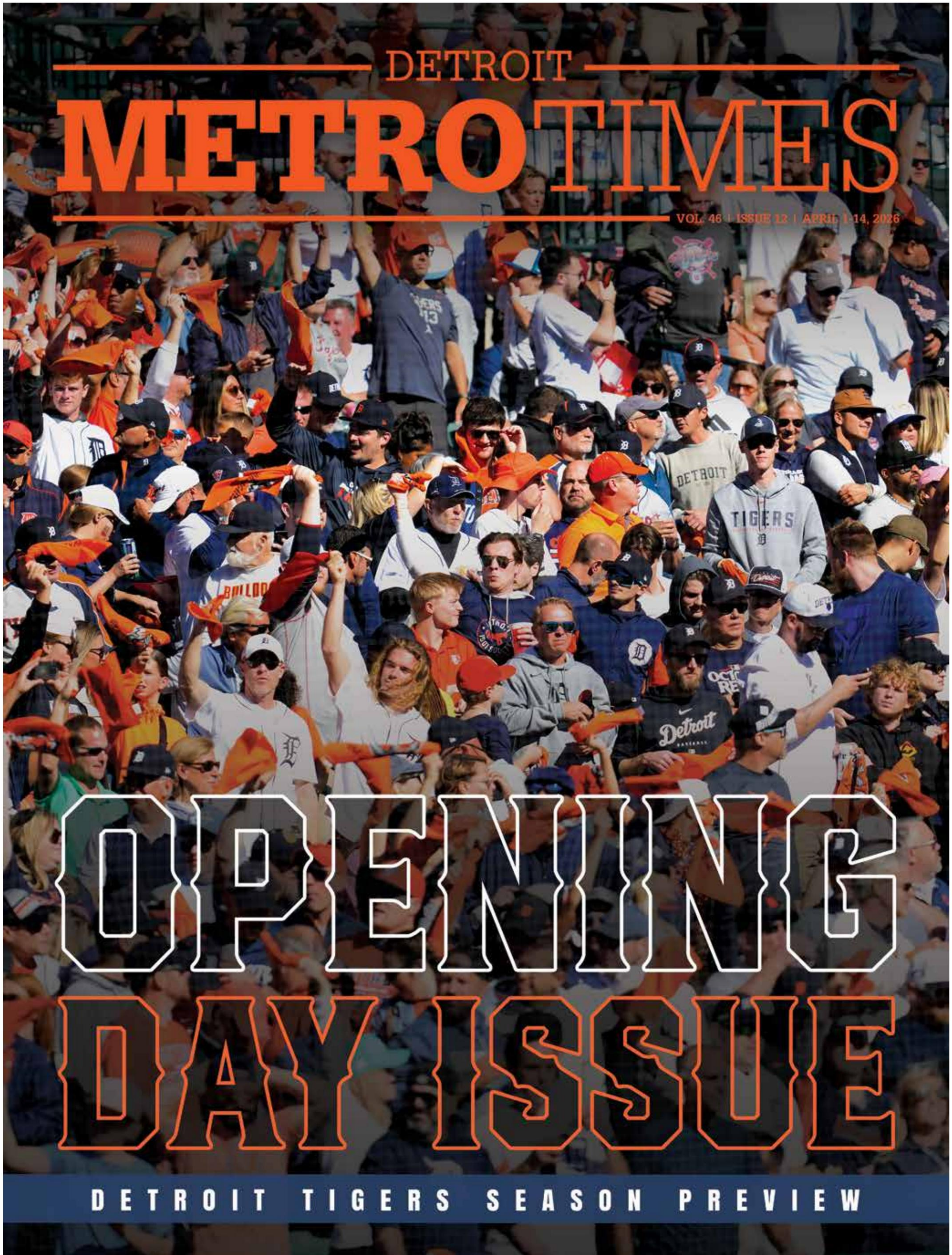




DETROIT

METROTIMES

VOL. 46 | ISSUE 12 | APRIL 1-14, 2026

OPENING DAY ISSUE

DETROIT TIGERS SEASON PREVIEW

BOWLERO

Lanes & Lounge

APRIL

NO COVER EVENTS

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
sunday karaoke WITH MATT THE MILLIONAIRE	CLOSED	tuesday karaoke WITH MATT THE MILLIONAIRE	01	02 FIRST THURSDAYS EXPEDITION	03 A PROPER AXE STICK BOOVY DJ G-SPOT	04 BIRDS FROM DINOSAURS THE TREAD LIGHTLIES DJ TONY DRAKE
05 CLOSED FOR EASTER	06 CLOSED	07	08 CLASSIC LOUNGE SOUNDS WITH KESHTKAR & CO.	09	10 PAXTON SPANGLER BAND DJ CAPTAIN MIKE	11 THE WHISKEY CHARMERS THE GASHOUNDS DJ MATTATTACK & DJ STEVIESAIDSO
12	13 CLOSED	14	15	16 POP CULTURE TRIVIA NIGHT WITH SCOTT ZUMBERG	17 MEETING STREET (LOUISVILLE) THE HOURLIES SIMULATION DJ UDENJOE	18 THE REEFERMAN DJ VEEB
19	20 CLOSED	21	22 CLASSIC LOUNGE SOUNDS WITH KESHTKAR & CO.	23 THE MATT STAHL BAND THE DIRK KROLL BAND	24 BELETRIE TOUCH THE CLOUDS DJ KINDLE	25 TBA DJ AMY K
26 SOUL & BOWL WDET FUNDRAISER BILLY DAVIS RHYTHM MACHINE BAND	27 CLOSED	28	29	30 SKA NIGHT DETROIT RIDDIM CREW THE BELMARKS	01 JERRY'S TONE GRATEFUL DEAD TRIBUTE DJ TOTHEGODS	02 ALL OVER THE SHOP PAINTING WITH LIGHT DJ J. WALKER & DJ JOHN C. DODGE

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INDUSTRY NIGHT EVERY SUNDAY 6-9PM (20% OFF ALL DRINKS)

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& DJ SANFORD

SAT MAY 9
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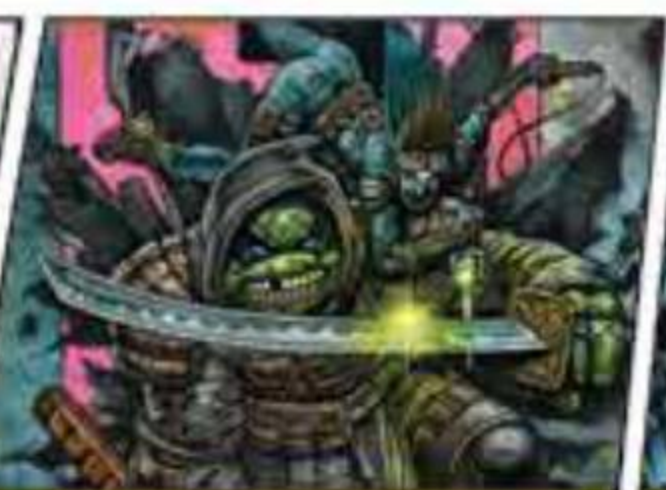
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15-17
2026**



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News & Views

Feedback 8

News 10

Cover Story

Detroit Tigers Opening Day

Guide 14

What's Going On

Things to do this week 20

Culture

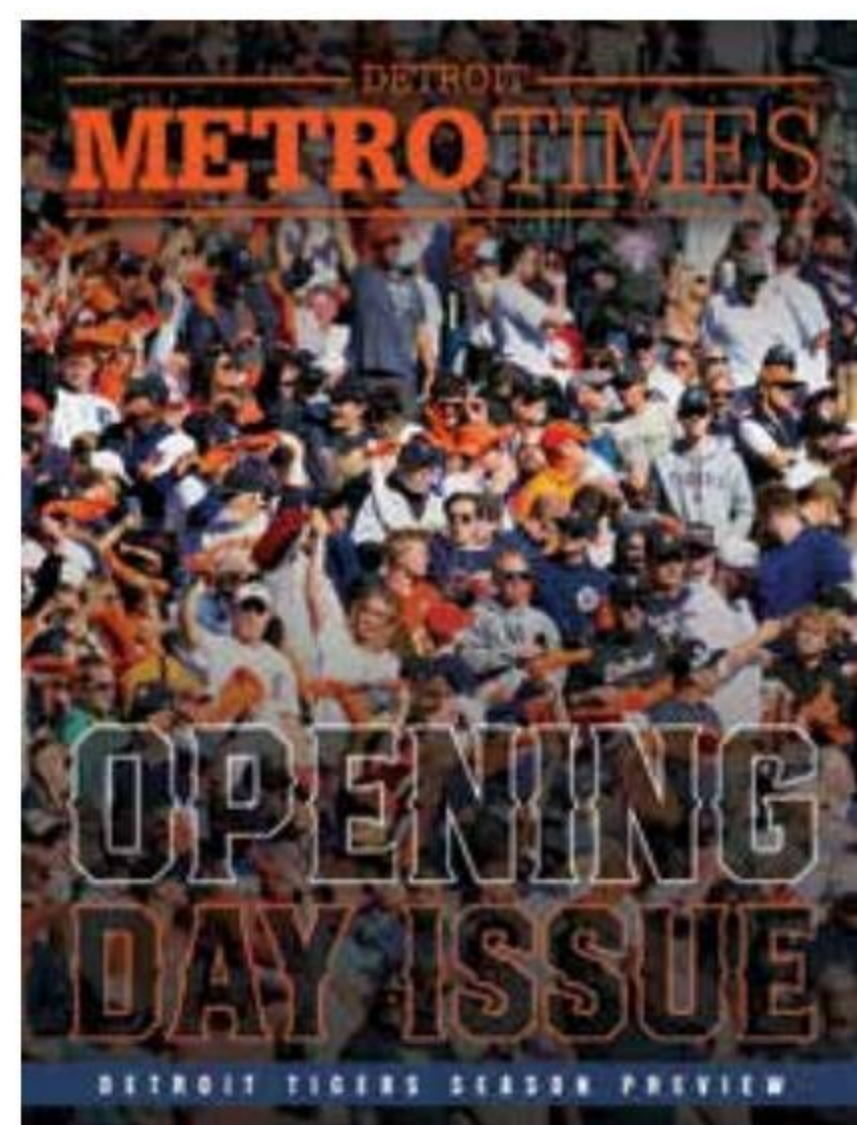
Bites 27

Film 28

Weed 30

Savage Love 32

Horoscopes 34



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THE RE-UP
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SUNDAY APRIL 12
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NEWS & VIEWS

Feedback

Readers respond to last issue's cover story, which featured submissions from more than 150 local music acts. You can find a Spotify playlist featuring these artists that cover star DUANE graciously made (thank you!) at bit.ly/3NYANYG.

Thanks for including us among so many incredible artists! 🙏
—@siasmusic, Instagram

Wow!!! Thank you so much @metrotimes ❤️🙏
—@audrey_ray, Instagram

Thank you so much for featuring me in this!
—@darkmarkermagic, Instagram

Appreciate the juice 🍷🔥
—@kovax.detroit, Instagram

thanks guys. ❤️
—@gloomco, Instagram

Thanks for including me
—@carlbphillips, Instagram

@preppymanpics the photos from this shoot are all superb 🌟 and u created a Cover Boi !! 🏆
—@nickybabydetroit, Instagram

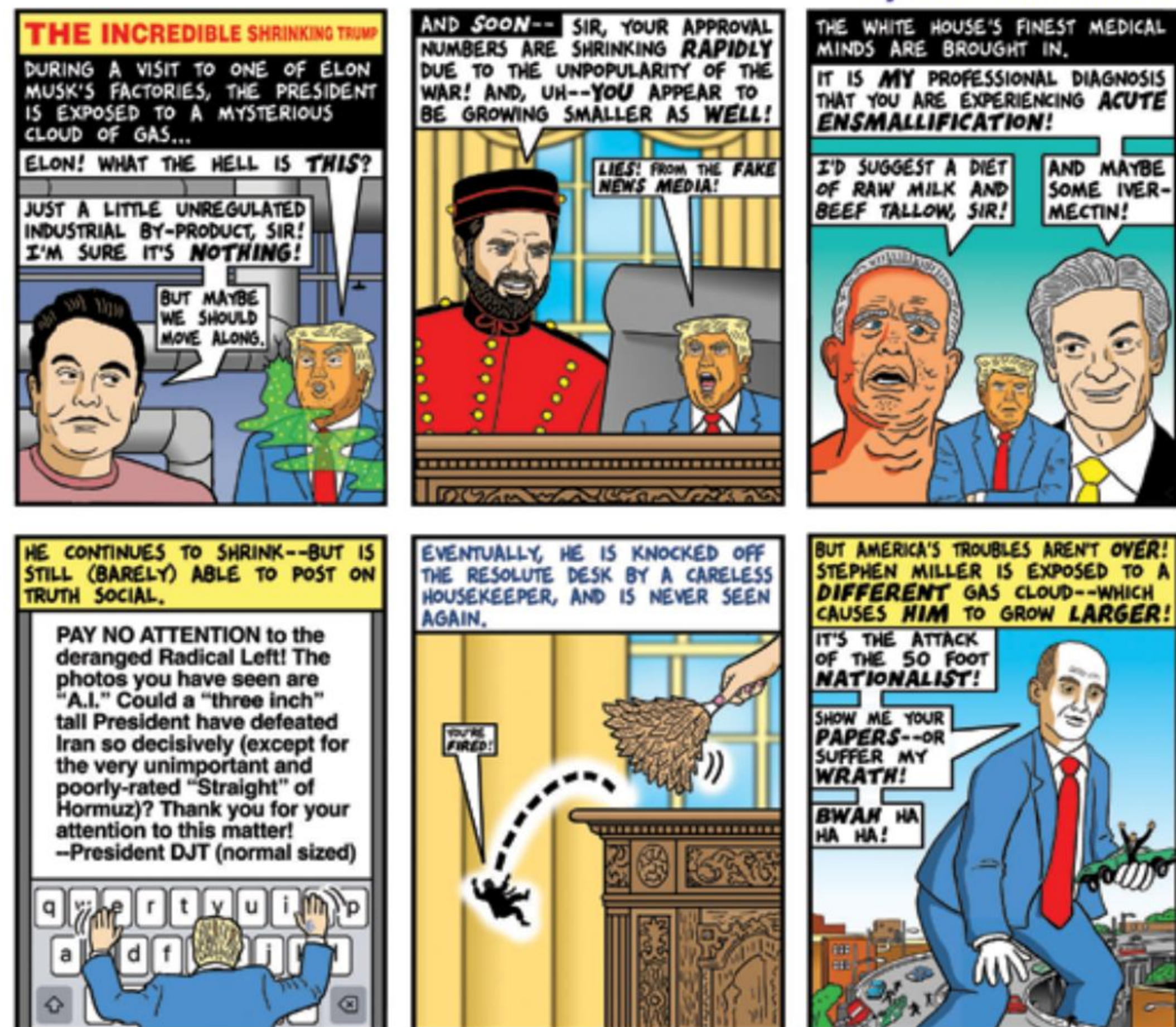
@nickybabydetroit Thank you!! It was such a fun shoot. And yes @duane_313 is a star
—@preppymanpics, Instagram

Have an opinion? Sound off:
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THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



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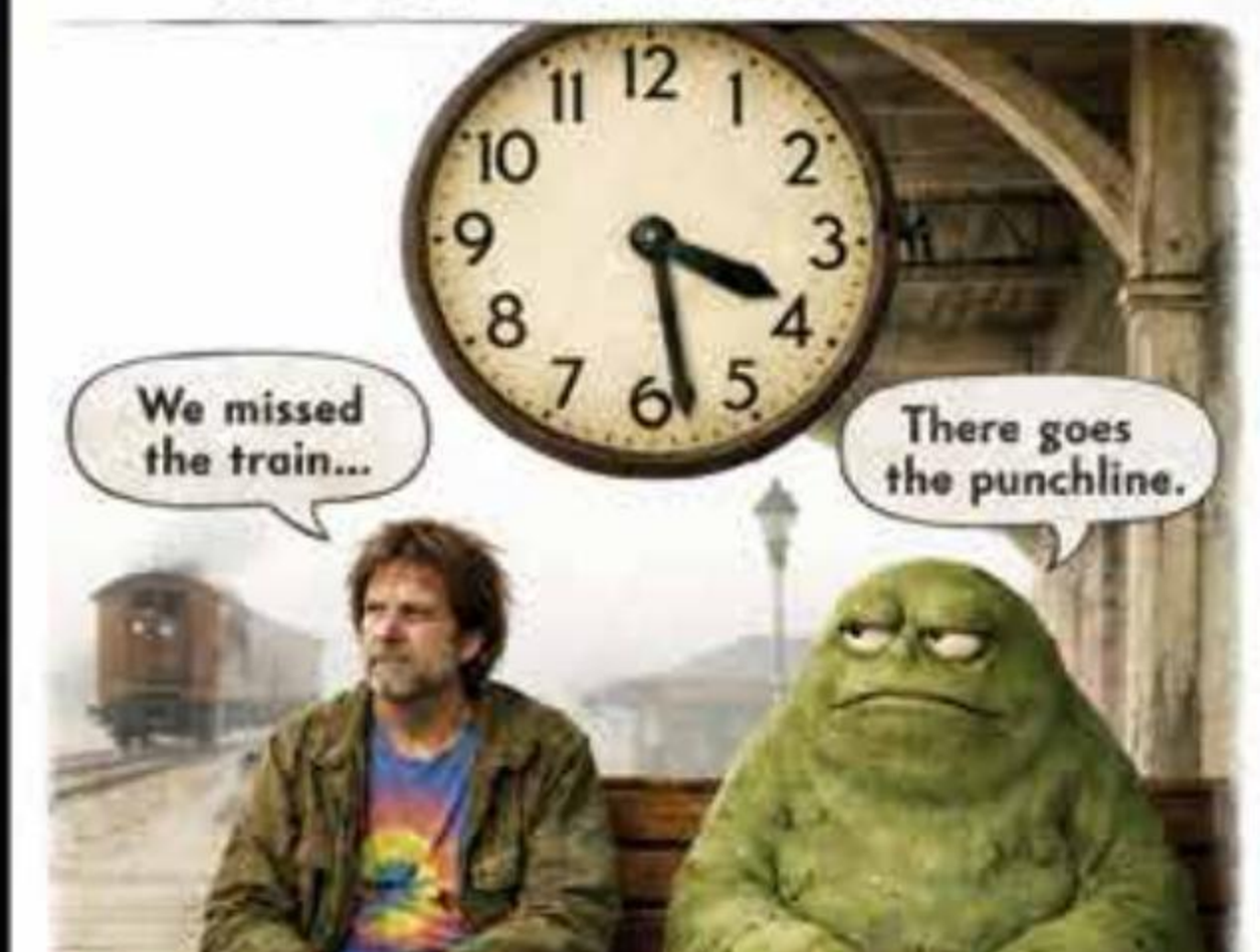
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Thousands of people marched in Detroit during a No Kings protest on Saturday, March 28.

LEE DEVITO

'No Kings' rallies believed to be largest single-day protest in U.S. history

More than 25,000 people turned out at eight No Kings protests across metro Detroit on Saturday, organizers estimate, calling it "one of the largest coordinated civic mobilizations the region has seen in years."

The demonstrations, backed by local Indivisible groups and more than 30 partner organizations, took place in Detroit, Canton, Wyandotte, Grosse Pointe, Ferndale, Macomb, Northville, and Rochester. Organizers said turnout estimates were based on "proven methods" that include drone footage, handout counts, and square-footage analysis.

The rallies were part of the larger No Kings movement, a national protest campaign organized largely by Indivisible and allied groups in opposition to President Donald Trump and rising authoritarianism, attacks on democratic norms, and threats to voting rights, immigrants and civil liberties.

Indivisible says the movement began in 2015 as a single day of action and grew into repeated nationwide mobilizations.

The nationwide rallies on Saturday are believed to be the largest single-day demonstration in U.S. history, with estimates ranging between 8-9 million people across more than 3,300 No Kings rallies.

In metro Detroit, organizers said the events brought together labor groups, clergy, civil rights advocates, immigrant rights activists, environmental justice organizers, and local residents angered by federal policies that have driven up household costs, increased immigration enforcement, and undermined constitutional protections.

"Americans do not serve kings," Sherri Masson of Indivisible Michigan said. "We do not bow down to strongmen. We do not sacrifice our sons and daughters in war because someone

in power demands loyalty, instead of accountability. We already fought a revolution to end that idea and we're not bringing it back now."

For Angela Davenport, of Voting Access for All, democracy is at stake.

"Everyone deserves the right to vote," Davenport said. "Right now, there's a raging debate in the Senate about the SAVE act. And an out-of-state billionaire has poured billions of dollars into a similar act right here in Michigan. This is just another way that our right to have a voice is being chipped away."

Linda Gruber, of Senior Caucus, condemned federal immigration enforcement, saying local families were living in fear.

"Our neighbors are being threatened," Gruber said. "The Trump administration is not just ignoring our Bill of Rights, they're trampling all over it. Simply put, ICE is committing

crimes against humanity. It's domestic terrorism and we won't back down."

Ferndale drew the largest crowd, with organizers estimating 7,000 attendees. Wyandotte followed with 5,500, while Detroit drew about 4,500. Other demonstrations brought an estimated 2,300 to Canton, 2,000 to Macomb, 1,800 to Northville, 1,600 to Grosse Pointe, and 1,250 to Rochester.

The Detroit-area rallies were part of a larger movement in Michigan. On Saturday, more than 100 No Kings events were held across the state, including in Lansing, Midland, Big Rapids, Bad Axe and other communities.

Saturday's protests were part of the third major No Kings mobilization.

"Today was not an endpoint but a beginning, and that the coalition intends to remain active in the weeks and months ahead," local organizers said in a news release Saturday.

—Steve Neavling

Michigan and Romulus sue to block ICE detention center at warehouse

Michigan Attorney General

Dana Nessel and the city of Romulus filed a federal lawsuit last month seeking to stop the Trump administration from converting a local warehouse into a large-scale immigration detention center.

The complaint, filed in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, asks a judge to declare the plan unlawful and permanently block the conversion of the facility at 7525 Cogswell Street into a detention center, which is expected to hold up to 500 people.

“As the state’s Attorney General, I have a legal and moral obligation to act if and when this administration behaves unlawfully and does so in a way that harms Michigan residents,” Nessel said. “The Romulus Warehouse is simply not—and never will be—an appropriate place for a large-scale detention center. DHS in its zealous quest for a bigger nationwide footprint, appears to

have conducted an ill-conceived rush job, free from any traditional planning considerations or even basic concern for the many Romulus residents who will be impacted by their actions.”

According to the lawsuit, federal officials quietly purchased the roughly 249,000-square-foot warehouse in February without notifying state or local officials and intend to retrofit it as part of an aggressive push to expand immigration detention capacity nationwide.

State and city officials argue the site is ill-suited for detention, citing its proximity to homes and schools, its location in a floodplain with recent flooding, and infrastructure limitations. The building has only six bathrooms and is connected to a sewer system that the lawsuit says cannot support hundreds of detainees and staff.

The complaint also alleges the project would strain local police, fire, and emergency services, worsen traffic on a three-lane road, and threaten near-

by wetlands and protected wildlife habitat.

Romulus Mayor Robert McCraight said the city is already burdened by major infrastructure, including the Detroit Metropolitan Airport and an existing hazardous waste injection well.

“Two words I hate to use when describing my home city are ‘overburdened and underserved,’” McCraight said. “We are not asking for a handout, just the chance to grow and improve the quality of life for our residents, unburdened by outside interference.”

The lawsuit claims the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Immigration and Customs Enforcement violated multiple federal laws, including the Administrative Procedure Act, by failing to consider alternative sites, such as existing prisons or jails, and by not consulting with state and local officials before purchasing the property.

It also alleges the agencies failed

to conduct required environmental reviews under the National Environmental Policy Act, despite the site’s location in a federally recognized floodplain and near protected wetlands.

State Rep. Dylan Wegela, whose district includes the site, criticized ICE’s record and warned of potential consequences.

“This year alone at least 13 people have died in ICE custody,” Wegela said. “It’s a disaster in the making.”

The Romulus property is one of roughly two dozen industrial warehouses that the Trump administration has targeted for conversion as part of a plan to significantly expand detention capacity. The lawsuit says the initiative aims to increase available detention beds to more than 90,000 nationwide.

City and state officials are asking the court to halt any construction or operation of the facility while the case proceeds.

—Steve Neavling

Benson takes on data center boom with stricter safeguards

Democratic gubernatorial candidate

Jocelyn Benson is rolling out a plan to impose strict new safeguards on data centers in Michigan to address concerns over rising energy costs, environmental impacts, and transparency.

As artificial intelligence increases the demand for massive, energy-devouring facilities, many residents across the state are pushing back, saying the projects will harm communities and ratepayers.

Despite what’s at stake, critics say the state’s approval process is opaque and favors developers over residents.

Benson, the secretary of state and Democratic frontrunner for governor, first announced the plan to *Metro Times*. She said Michigan should only allow data centers under strict conditions that protect residents and the environment.

The centers must “improve and deliver prosperity, well-paying union jobs, and affordable, low energy costs for our residents,” Benson’s campaign said.

Her proposal would set enforceable conditions to avoid the kinds of problems that have prompted opposition to similar projects nationwide.

Those requirements include:

Mandatory public hearings before any project is approved

Full transparency and disclosure to prevent backroom deals

Proof, before construction, that projects will not harm natural resources or increase energy costs

A requirement that data centers — not ratepayers — cover the cost of increased energy demand

Union labor agreements to ensure well-paying jobs

Benson said projects that fail to meet those standards would not be allowed to operate in Michigan.

The proposal comes as Michigan becomes a hotspot for data center development. Data centers are the backbone of the internet, housing servers, networking equipment, and other infrastructure. While they have existed for decades, their growth has increased exponentially to meet the energy demands of artificial intelligence and cloud computing.

Developers are pursuing data center projects in at least 10 Michigan communities, with as many as 16 sites across the state under consideration. Without safeguards in place, the projects could permanently alter rural areas, cause environmental damage, and raise energy costs, critics say.

The controversy has been especially intense in Washtenaw County, where a proposed \$7 billion data center in Saline Township, which is backed by major tech companies, would consume as much electricity as nearly one million homes.

Residents and environmental groups have warned the project could destroy wetlands, strain the power grid, and increase costs for consumers.

Polling and public surveys have shown

residents are increasingly skeptical of data centers, particularly over their heavy electricity and water use, with opposition cutting across political lines.

A December poll by Progress Michigan found a majority of Michiganders oppose data centers because of concerns over rising utility bills, environmental impacts, and a lack of transparency.

Benson’s plan is aimed at addressing those issues.

The backlash has turned data centers into a contentious issue for political campaigns. In the gubernatorial race, independent candidate Mike Duggan has called data centers “vital” for future jobs but is pushing for a uniform statewide standard with protections for water use and electricity costs.

The leading Republican candidate, U.S. Rep. John James, has emphasized local control over development decisions, but he has yet to make data centers a central issue in his campaign.

Benson’s announcement follows a misleading narrative, pushed by right-wing media sites, about her ties to the controversial data center project in Saline Township. The claims originated in an article by *The Midwesterner*, which focused on her husband, Ryan Friedrichs, a vice president at Related Digital, a company connected to data center development. The article pointed out that Related Digital sued Saline Township after trustees denied a rezoning request for the project.

Other right-wing outlets and social

media accounts picked up on the story and made unproven claims that Friedrichs stood to profit from data center development and his relationship with Benson.

But the project is tied to Gov. Gretchen Whitmer’s administration, and Benson has no role in it as secretary of state.

Related Digital has repeatedly said that Friedrichs will make no money from the project and has recused himself from any state-related work, including the Saline township project.

“Mr. Friedrichs has never had any role in the financing of Related Digital’s project and makes no commission from it,” a company spokesperson said. “Any claims to the contrary are 100% false.”

In a statement to *Metro Times*, the spokesperson said Friedrichs is focused on policy efforts in other states. As an employee, he receives a standard salary and bonus and does not receive compensation tied to the data center development, she said.

“All of Ryan’s work pertains to projects in other states,” the spokesperson said.

Benson’s proposal is an attempt to strike a balance between attracting new jobs and protecting residents and communities from the potential costs and environmental impacts of large-scale data centers.

“Data centers and corporations that violate these guardrails will not be able to operate in Michigan,” Benson’s campaign said.

—Steve Neavling

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Palestinian American girl reaches settlement with Plymouth-Canton schools

Plymouth-Canton Community Schools has agreed to settle a federal lawsuit alleging a middle school student's First Amendment rights were violated when she was reprimanded for refusing to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance in protest of the war in Gaza.

The agreement, announced last month by the ACLU of Michigan and the Arab American Civil Rights League, resolves a case filed last year on behalf of a 14-year-old student identified as D.K., who is of Palestinian descent. The lawsuit alleged that a teacher at West Middle School in Canton humiliated the student for remaining seated and silent during the pledge, despite longstanding constitutional protections allowing students to opt out.

As part of the settlement, the district agreed to provide diversity, sensitivity, and First Amendment training to staff and leadership. Officials also agreed not to discipline D.K. for her actions, to remove any references suggesting her conduct was improper from her school records, and to offer counseling if needed.

"This experience definitely had a big impact on me and my life," D.K. said in a statement. "It was terrifying at times, scary to face a teacher and overwhelming with the attention that came with the publicity. But it taught me the importance of speaking up for what I believe is right. I feel proud of the

outcome and of being part of something that reinforces how important free speech is. I've learned that even when it feels uncomfortable or risky, speaking out can make a difference — not just for me, but for others as well."

The lawsuit, filed in June 2025, accused a teacher of publicly reprimanding D.K. and telling her that if she did not like the country, she should "go back" to where she came from after she explained her protest. Attorneys said the incidents caused lasting emotional harm, including anxiety, nightmares, and a decline in academic performance.

D.K.'s father, Jacob Khalaf, said his daughter showed courage in standing up to authority.

"She had the courage to resist when a person in authority tried to make her relinquish her right to free speech, and then, with the help of the ACLU and ACRL, brought a lawsuit to make sure her First Amendment rights, as well as those of others, were protected," Khalaf said. "That is a lot for anyone, let alone someone still in middle school. What she did should inspire us all."

Mark Fancher, a former ACLU attorney involved in the case, said the resolution should lead to broader changes in how the district treats students of different backgrounds.

"As difficult as this has all been for our client and her family, their trauma has not been in vain," Fancher said. "At a



"It taught me the importance of speaking up for what I believe is right." SHUTTERSTOCK

time of great turmoil and political conflict in the U.S. and around the world, the value of protecting free speech rights enshrined in the First Amendment has never been more important."

Nabih Ayad, co-counsel and founder of the Arab American Civil Rights League, said the case drew strong attention in the Arab American community.

"We are pleased with the outcome and

resolution of this important constitutional matter that so many in the Arab American community welcome," Ayad said. The case centered on a well-established legal principle affirmed by the U.S. Supreme Court more than 80 years ago. Students cannot be compelled to stand for or recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

—Steve Neavling

Detroit police sergeant was a serial rapist, prosecutor says

They were young girls and women, walking to school, home, or a friend's house in Detroit when they were abducted at gunpoint and raped more than two decades ago.

The suspect, it turns out, is Benjamin Wagner — a Detroit Police sergeant who retired in 2017 and is now facing life in prison on numerous kidnapping and criminal sexual conduct charges.

Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy announced last month that Benjamin Wagner, 68, faces 14 felony counts tied to five sexual assaults between 1999 and 2003 on Detroit's northwest side.

"The alleged facts in this case are disturbing, unsettling and infuriating," Worthy said during the news conference. "The deplorable fact in this case is that the person that we are charging today has led a double life as a law enforcement officer and a serial rapist."

Authorities allege Wagner targeted girls and young women between the ages of 15 and 23, approaching them while they were walking and then forcing them at gunpoint into secluded areas where he sexually assaulted them.

Wagner, who joined DPD in 1989 and retired in 2017, was arrested in Greenville, N.C. He was expected to be returned to Michigan for arraignment in 36th District Court.

The charges are tied directly to sexual assault kits collected at the time of the attacks. But the evidence sat untested for years as part of a backlog that once exceeded 11,000 kits in Detroit.

"This case is part and parcel of all the work that has been done," Worthy said, referring to her office's long-running effort to process the kits.

Detroit's rape kit backlog came to light in 2009, when more than 11,000 untested kits were discovered in a DPD storage facility. The kits dated back decades, representing thousands of sexual assault cases that were never fully investigated.

At the time, advocates and investigators described the backlog as one of the largest in the country and an embarrassing example of how sexual assault cases were historically mishandled.

Worthy launched a sweeping initiative to test every kit and reinvestigate

the cases, partnering with the Michigan State Police, the FBI, and local law enforcement agencies. The effort eventually became known as the Wayne County Sexual Assault Kit Task Force.

"It took eight years, maybe nine years to even get them all tested," Worthy said.

From there, investigators began building cases, first prioritizing those nearing the statute of limitations, then working backward through older assaults, Worthy said.

The effort has led to hundreds of prosecutions and convictions, many involving serial offenders identified through DNA evidence uploaded to national databases.

In this case, all five victims had sexual assault kits collected at the time of the attacks, which ultimately helped link Wagner to the crimes, Worthy said.

Detroit Police Chief Todd Bettison said the case highlights both the severity of the allegations and the persistence required to solve cold cases.

"Cold cases are oftentimes some

of the most difficult cases to solve," Bettison said. "They require years of persistent, careful review of evidence, and most importantly, an unwavering commitment to justice."

He added that Wagner's alleged actions "do not represent the integrity and the values" of the department.

Worthy said the case involved multiple law enforcement agencies, including the Detroit police, the Wayne County Sheriff's Office, Michigan State Police, and the FBI.

"This case is illustrative of a multi-year journey to justice," Worthy said. "Collaboration, patience, determination, and a focus on our survivors was key here. We are a victim-centered, trauma-informed, and offender-focused office."

Worthy said the investigation remains ongoing and urged anyone who may have been assaulted by Wagner to come forward by calling the Detroit Police Department Sex Crimes Unit at 313-596-1950 and requesting to speak with Sgt. Jennifer Carlson.

—Steve Neavling **MT**

DON'T CALL IT A COMEBACK

A new biography of former Detroit Tiger Ron LeFlore, who in the 1970s famously went from prison to the big leagues, hits bookshelves this week.

By Adam Henig

After his notorious adolescence on the east side of Detroit in the 1960s, Ron LeFlore made national news in the '70s as his hometown team's unlikely center fielder. And after a brief, but storied major-league career, which included one All-Star game and 455 stolen bases, LeFlore hasn't made many headlines in recent years. But now more than 50 years after his big-league debut, LeFlore, 77, is experiencing a late-inning renaissance. Last November, LeFlore was inducted into the "people's hall of fame." Now comes a new biography from Bay Area author Adam Henig that reminds readers what a truly remarkable life he's led — both on the field and off.

The first time that the *Detroit Free Press* mentioned the words "hitting streak" and Ron LeFlore in the same sentence was on May 8, 1976. *Free Press* reporter Jim Hawkins was writing about how Ron, a week earlier, had stolen a career-high four bases against the Chicago White Sox, then casually noted that the center fielder currently had a ten-game hitting streak. At some point in a hitter's career, a player will likely develop a hitting streak that typically extends to thirteen, fourteen, or sixteen games. But Ron's streak didn't stop there.

"Look Out DiMag . . . Here Comes LeFlore" was the headline of Hawkins's piece when Ron's streak had extended to eighteen consecutive games, the longest by a Tiger since Al Kaline's twenty-two-game hitting streak in 1961.

So much of the allure of baseball is its historic recordkeeping. Among the most revered records at this time were the career home run category (set by the Atlanta Braves' Hank Aaron with 755) and home runs hit in a single season (held by the New York Yankees' Roger Maris with sixty-one). Then there were the records for consecutive games played (Lou Gehrig, with 2,130), and baseball's longest consecutive hitting streak (fifty-six, set in 1941 by the Yankees' Joe



Detroit Tigers rookie outfielder Ron LeFlore flexes before his first major-league at-bat on Aug. 1, 1974.

AP PHOTO/PAUL SHANE

DiMaggio). Of all these records, DiMaggio's would be the only one that would continue to stand the test of time.

The first significant milestone Ron surpassed was Al Kaline's twenty-two-game hitting streak set in 1961. It would be eclipsed on May 21. At that point, it was no longer a Detroit story.

As Ron continued to hit in every game and inched closer to DiMaggio's seemingly unassailable record, the national media joined the parade in tracking the streak, to the chagrin of at least one of his teammates. Inside the team's less-than-impressive locker room, outfielder Alex Johnson, whose locker was next to Ron's, found non-Detroit writers sitting on his stool after each passing game, not realizing it wasn't for them.

Among Tiger fans, whenever Ron came up to bat, fans made sure to be in their seats. He was one of the only exciting

hitters on the club to watch during this time. But during the streak, it was taken to a whole new level.

"In the Tiger dugout, in the press box, in the bullpen, in the grandstand, and in the centerfield bleachers, all eyes are on the hot hitting Tiger star every time he steps up to the plate," Hawkins wrote. Luckily for Ron, about half of the time during his streak, he would get a hit in his first at bat, suspending any anticipation. But when he didn't, that was when the nail-biting in the stands ensued. Once he got a hit, the fans sighed with relief. When the inning was over, Ron jogged to center field to a standing ovation from those in the bleachers, who were chanting, "LeFlore! LeFlore! LeFlore!"

On May 25, Ron was approaching the next milestone: twenty-seven games, the longest hitting streak in the American League since 1951, set by Boston Red Sox's Dom DiMaggio (Joe's younger brother).

When Ron collected hit number twenty-eight, the focus turned to twenty-nine, which would tie the longest streak by a Detroit Tiger since Pete Fox in 1935.

Deemed by the *New York Times* as the "league's top hitter" two months into the 1976 season, Ron was hitting an American League-leading .392 batting average and was second in the league in hits and doubles, tied for third in triples, and eighth in stolen bases. He was considered a lock for the 1976 All-Star Game in Philadelphia.

When Ron reached thirty consecutive [games with a hit] on May 27 against the Orioles on the game's first pitch (he hit a stand-up triple), the talk of the streak became even more serious. Could he get to forty? Fifty? Fifty-six? Whether on radio or television, in the sports section or any bar, the "whole town" of Motor City was talking about it. When Tiger manager Ralph Houk was asked how Ron measured

up against past players he had managed, such as Mickey Mantle and Yogi Berra, he said, “[I]t’s too early to start comparing Ron LeFlore to baseball’s all-time greats.” True, but it was pointed out that so few players had ever accomplished such a feat (Mantle and Berra not among them). Babe Ruth had never had a thirty-game hitting streak. Neither had Lou Gehrig, Ted Williams, or even Ron’s former teammate Al Kaline. Since 1900, only twelve players have had longer consecutive hitting streaks.

While it would be virtually impossible for anyone to compartmentalize that level of attention, Ron acquired an effective coping mechanism: transcendental meditation. “I meditate twice a day . . . usually about 15 or 20 minutes when I get up,” Ron disclosed, “and then about 15 or 20 minutes a couple of hours before I come to the ballpark.” He added, “It gives you a lot of relaxation.”

The regimen was inspired by John Fetzer, the 74-year-old owner of the Detroit Tigers. A spiritual man, Fetzer, who had an estimated net worth of \$100 million, making him the wealthiest resident of the state of Michigan, was on the front lines of the new age movement.

Meditation played a role in helping Ron to attain one of the longest hitting streaks in MLB history. What also contributed was the time he had spent in Puerto Rico. There, he had learned to become a patient hitter, no longer lunging at pitches. It was telling that his first home run in 1976 did not occur until his thirtieth game of the season — and what a blast it was. During the second game of a doubleheader against Baltimore at Tiger Stadium, in the midst of the streak, Ron hit a “booming drive into the upper deck in right centerfield.”

On May 28, the Tigers were at home, taking on the league-leading New York Yankees, now led by former Tiger manager Billy Martin. With rain expected, the stadium was less than half-filled that evening. Nonetheless, the intensity between these two rivals that dated back seventy-five years was bitterly apparent. Before the game had even started, Yankee catcher Thurman Munson made it clear that the Yankees intended to stop Ron’s thirty-game hitting streak.

“He ain’t gonna get no hit tonight, so you guys can stop writing about it,” Munson blurted to reporters ahead of the first pitch.

In his first at bat, when Ron had gotten a hit nearly half the time during his streak, he tapped a fly ball in shallow right field for an out. In his second plate appearance, the Tigers were up 1–0, and teammate Jerry Manuel was on second base. The team was hoping to add a run, which they would need against the mighty Yankees. With a full count against him, Ron slashed the ball along the third baseline. It should have easily been a hit for Ron, but Yankee third baseman Graig Nettles happened to be covering the bag. Nettles normally played farther away from the base to cover more ground — except that he saw Manuel

stealing, and that forced him to move over to the third baseline.

“If I hadn’t gone over to cover the bag, I probably wouldn’t have fielded the ball quickly enough to throw LeFlore out,” Nettles later said.

Now zero for two, Ron’s third at bat, which came during the sixth inning, involved Manuel again. He hit a “slow chopper” to the shortstop. If no one had been on base, Ron would have likely beat the throw to first. However, since Manuel was on first base and heading to second, the Yankees shortstop flipped the ball to the second baseman, forcing Manuel out. Ron was safe, but his at bat was ruled a ground out, not a hit.

With the Tigers down 9–5 in the bottom of the eighth, not only was the game slipping away from them but Ron’s thirty-game hitting streak was also in danger of ending.

Yankee reliever Tippy Martinez was on the mound. Ron led off the inning. He swung at the first pitch. Strike one. Ron sensed he was reverting to his old habits: chasing the ball, not exercising patience. Before he took his next pitch, he noticed Yankee first baseman Chris Chambliss was playing deep, so he tried something different: a bunt.

Martinez delivered the pitch. Ron went into a bunting position. He made contact, but it went foul. Strike two.

Munson called time and went to talk it over with his pitcher. “Throw him a good fastball, but keep it inside,” he told Martinez.

Ron went back into the batter’s box. The pitch came across the plate — right down the middle, like Munson wanted it. It was Ron’s favorite pitch, but he didn’t swing at it. Home plate umpire Jerry Neudecker raised his fist. Strike three.

Ron walked slowly back to the dugout. He knew. His teammates knew. The fans knew. The streak had ended.

When the eighth inning ended (all three batters went down one, two, three), Ron jogged out to center field. The fans in the bleachers gave him a standing ovation, and it quickly spread to the rest of the stadium. Twenty thousand fans were on their feet. They weren’t stopping until Ron acknowledged it by pulling on his baseball cap.

Once the crowd settled down, the game went on, and the Tigers lost.

Ron’s thirty-game hitting streak — which really was thirty-one games, if you factor in the last game he played from the previous season — was the longest in the American League since Dom DiMaggio in 1949 and the longest by a Detroit Tiger since 1930. Ron, who was awarded the American League’s Player of the Month for May, had solidified his credentials and accomplished something that only a handful of players had ever done.

Excerpted from Baseball’s Outcast: The Story of Ron LeFlore by Adam Henig, out April 2 by Bloomsbury Academic.



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Solar Monolith

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5/08 Endless Mike and the Beagle Club/
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ON THE BRINK OF GLORY

Why loyal Tigers fans could finally be rewarded this season

By Gary Gillette

The essence of true fans is faith: Faith in their team, faith in their team's management, and faith in their hometown heroes. Faith even when they are losing. Faith even when they lose year after year after year.

In 2026, true blue Tigers fans are going to be rewarded for their steadfastness during nine long years in the desert from 2015 to 2023, as well as for their ability to recover from the October disappointments of the past two seasons.

Everyone knows the hackneyed saying, "There's no crying in baseball," but saying that to a Tigers fan after the last pitch of climactic Game 5 against the Mariners last October would likely have earned you a quick punch in the nose. After 15 hard-fought innings, the 2025 Bengals bowed out of the postseason, one precious run and one ALCS short of the bright lights of the World Series.

A lot of the blame went to Detroit's hitters, who scratched out only 29 runs in their eight postseason games — including exactly zero runs in the last nine innings of their heartbreaking loss to Seattle. Meanwhile, their supposedly vulnerable pitching staff posted a 2.91 ERA in the playoffs.

On the full season, Detroit's stickwork was mediocre in '25, plating 4.68 runs per game, about 5% better than the MLB average. Detroit's pitching and glove-work was a bit worse, holding the enemy to 4.27 runs per game, about 4% better than average. Neither is acceptable for a team hungering for October glory.

Motor City sports fans, toughened by the recent simultaneous droughts suffered by the Tigers, Lions, Pistons, and Red Wings, then cruelly compounded by the disappointing ends to the Lions' last two playoff runs, are in for a treat this summer. The combination of a weak division, the emergence of uber-prospect Kevin McGonigle, a furious finish to Tarik Skubal's time in Detroit, and the maturation of core players like Riley Greene bodes well for a smooth

ride to the AL Central title. And, after that, a bye in the first round of the playoffs that allows the Tigers to waltz through the Division Series and into their first American League Championship Series since 2012.

Conventional wisdom and competitive windows

It has been fashionable in the 21st century for MLB clubs to talk about their "competitive windows." The premise is that even the best teams can't contend every year, and periods of retrenchment are inevitable. With astute management, though, those rebuilds can be short and productive.

Detroit's President of Baseball Operations Scott Harris has demurred from the prevailing belief that such competitive windows and concomitant down cycles are inevitable. Harris asserts that he is trying to build a sustainable contender, and the track record of his three years in Detroit argues that he just might pull it off.

While it's not often openly discussed, the Tigers' front office is keen to avoid the traps former President, CEO, and GM Dave Dombrowski led the Tigers into. The first, after a surprise pennant in 2006, was spending the Tigers into — if not exactly poverty — serious budget inflexibility after signing too many players to generous, long-term contracts. Though those salary numbers now seem almost piddling, the Tigers' payroll, inflated with underperforming mediocrities, was a key factor in Detroit's failure to return to the playoffs from 2006 until 2011.

The second trap was drafting amateur players as trade bait in deals for veterans to shore up the team, instead of focusing on developing the amateur draft talent into productive big-leaguers. Harris has smartly chosen to avoid impoverishing the Tigers' farm system like Dombrowski did by trading premium prospects for declining veterans or short-term rentals — though Harris's failure to acquire a top-notch closer last



Detroit Tigers President of Baseball Operations Scott Harris.

TOM HAGERTY

July was roundly criticized at that time and, especially, after the Tigers were eliminated.

Consider this, however: In Dombrowski's last year with the Tigers, their farm system was bereft of talent, ranking 30th out of 30 MLB teams. It took five years for his successor, Al Avila, to drag Detroit's organization into top 10 status, even with the benefit of the high draft picks awarded to bottom-feeders like the Tigers in those years. Worse, by the time Harris was hired in late 2022, the Detroit farm system's ranking had tumbled back into the mid-20s.

Yet in three short campaigns, Harris's

brainiac management crew — led by GM Jeff Greenberg, VP Ryan Garko, and manager A.J. Hinch — has restored meaningful Octobers to Detroit while simultaneously boosting the farm system back into the top 10 ranks, including the No. 1 billing by MLB.com in '25.

Damn smart. Damn impressive. And the best is yet to come.

The critical core

As MLB salaries continue to increase, and as the price for top pitching talent skyrockets, the value of controllable and affordable homegrown talent has

been magnified. While baseball lore focuses on teams that supposedly buy their championships, very few can do so without a core of talent drafted and developed internally.

Uberprospect Kevin McGonigle, fellow top-10 overall prospect Max Clark, and others like Josue Briceño virtually guarantee that Detroit will be able to bolster its starting eight without spending a ton of money on free agents — money that has been spent on enhancing Detroit's rotation (e.g., the Framer Valdez signing) or may need to be spent upgrading the bullpen.

A key advantage Detroit should enjoy this year that they didn't have the past two seasons is boasting two reliable veteran starters in Cy Young winner Tarik Skubal and in Valdez. Even if their number three starter isn't brilliant, so long as Skubal and Valdez are healthy, Detroit's rotation should prosper. And if first-ballot future Hall of Famer Justin Verlander has the smarts and the experience (which he indubitably does), and remains healthy (dicey, to be sure), Detroit could lead with three aces in the Division Series, when all you need are three games to win. And when they advance to the best-of-seven LCS, Skubal can pitch both Games 1 and 4 — and 7, if necessary. Behind that Big Three, Jack Flaherty, Casey Mize, Troy Melton, and others are capable of filling out a top-flight starting staff.

If there's a cloud shading this sunny outlook, that would be the Tigers' bullpen. Dombrowski's teams rode horses like Verlander, Max Scherzer, and Rick Porcello to October, too often to be undone by an unreliable 'pen. Along with routinely exceeding almost unlimited budgets, one of Dombrowski's great flaws was his inability to curate first-rate bullpens, frequently overpaying for closers no longer at the top of their game. These veteran hurlers might have looked good enough from April to September while piling up scads of easy saves, but come October when the level of competition is much higher, used-to-be-dominant closers frequently get dismantled.

Harris has done something similar this year by signing Kenley Jansen, who has been closing games in the majors for 14 consecutive years but is no longer a lights-out moundsman. A.J. Hinch will mix-and-match Jansen with Will Vest and Kyle Finnegan, looking to combine them into a dominant, game-ending trio. If they can't get the job done, though, and the Tigers don't have a reliable relief corps by mid-July, Harris will look to trade for somebody else's ace reliever. It's true that Harris refused to do exactly that last year when the midseason market price for the best relievers was too high, but 2026 will be Skubal's last tour of duty in Detroit. Surely Harris and owner Chris Ilitch will

think differently about spending that kind of money in July if the Tigers aren't running away from the AL Central pack — particularly if they look like they're one ingredient away from snaring the World Series rings and trophy.

As for offensive fireworks — which the Tigers didn't generate much of last year — Harris is depending on McGonigle plus improvements from key hitters like Riley Greene, Colt Keith, and Parker Meadows. Greene should be better than he was in 2025, and Keith (only 24) could be on the verge of a breakout. If Meadows slumps again, Matt Vierling can pick up the slack reasonably well. Kerry Carpenter remains dead to right-handers.

McGonigle at short will be a huge upgrade offensively from what Detroit ran out there last year. Gleyber Torres should reprise his 2025 performance, and Spencer Torkelson should be as good as last year and might be better, though the days of expecting him to be the team's big bopper have passed. Dillon Dingler was a pleasant surprise offensively in 2025 and has at least another year like that in him before his offense declines due to the inevitable wear and tear of catching and age.

OPM

Fans everywhere want to see their team's commitment to win expressed in free spending to fix obvious problems. After all, it's very easy to spend other people's money, and the pit-

falls of overspending now often don't manifest themselves for years. Yet the thoughtful strategy Harris has implemented in Detroit seems both prudent and likely to be successful in the long run. In the short run, the fans will be placated with nothing less than a World Series berth this season.

While the loyalty and patience of Detroit fans have been sorely tested in recent years, now is the time to have faith in the team, its baseball guru of a manager, its young genius executive at the top, and the wealth of young and prime talent the club has accumulated.

Given that the Tigers' farm system should produce additional premium prospects in the next year or two, even the almost certain loss of Skubal to free agency after 2026 will be bearable if the Bengals have won it all or come very close to doing so.

After consecutive years of whipsawing their fans with an unbelievable second-half comeback followed by an unbelievable second-half collapse, the Tigers should have a relatively easy time in the exceptionally weak American League Central this year. The Guardians didn't pull any rabbits out of their hat in the offseason and should be mediocre. The Royals have Bobby Witt Jr. and not enough else. Despite their protests, the Twins are clearly in retrenchment mode because of the loss of their RSN contract. The White Sox continue to slowly dig themselves out of the deep hole they dug when they set an all-time record for losses in 2024.

Out on a limb

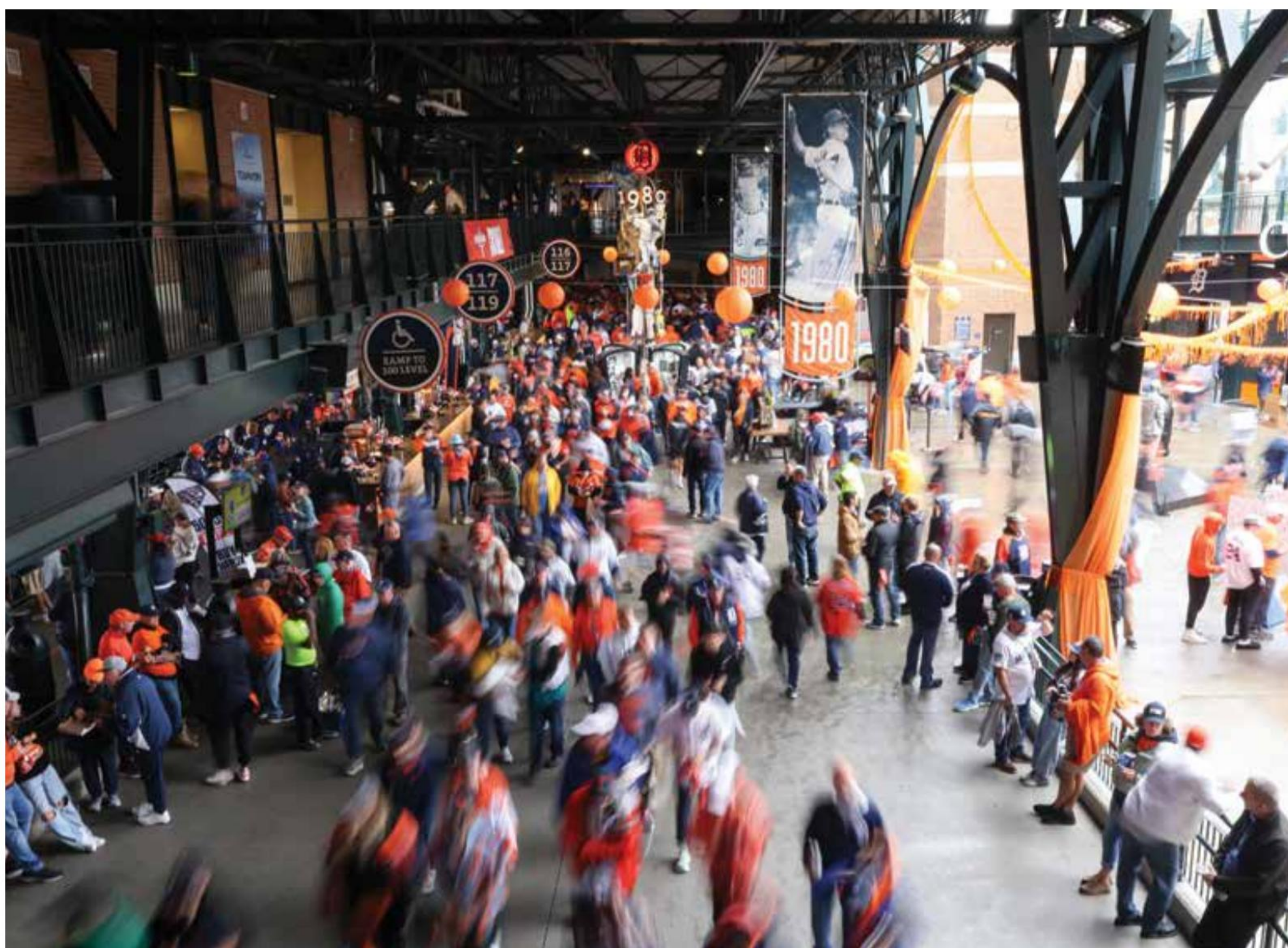
The stark truth in baseball is that, since the collapse of the fabled New York Yankees' postwar dynasty, fans never get a guarantee that their heroes will win it all. What about the mighty Dodgers, winners of the last two Fall Classics, you say? Ask Blue Jays fans how close they came to winning World Series Game 7 last year if you think Los Angeles is invulnerable. And ask Dodgers fans how many games they won in 2023 and 2024: an impressive 211 in the regular season, but a meager six in two postseasons.

The Tigers winning a championship is not inevitable. But it's a reasonable expectation given how well Harris and Hinch have molded this team, as well as how much depth Detroit has at both the major-league level and in the minors.

Predictions: Whether the Tigers win the division by six games or 16, they should also earn a coveted bye in the three-game Wild Card round. With that bye, they can optimize their rotation for the Division Series and also avoid the possibility that a key player will suffer an injury in the opening round.

After the bye, Skubal, Valdez, and Verlander will sew up the Division Series in three or four games. The Tigers will then battle to Game 6 or 7 in the AL Championship Series before emerging victorious on the World Series' stage.

See you at a raucous Comerica Park in October.



Detroit Tigers fans in 2025.

SCOTT W. GRAU/ICON SPORTSWIRE VIA AP IMAGES

THE SPIRIT OF '06

Can the gritty Tigs win it all in 2026?

By Steve Butts

Who can fault Detroit Tigers fans for having an increased sense of urgency and a heightened set of expectations for the 2026 season?

After making the playoffs for two straight seasons and likely only having one more season with back-to-back Cy Young Award winner Tarik Skubal on the roster, Tigers fans had become a bit antsy about the new season.

Those increased expectations had manifested themselves as both impatience and dissatisfaction with the team's early offseason acquisitions.

Early in the offseason, the Tigers did add some much-needed depth to their bullpen by signing reliever Drew Anderson (fresh off his baseball odyssey to Korea) and veteran closer Kenley Jansen, and they brought back 2025 trade deadline acquisition Kyle Finnegan.

Many fans thought the team needed to be more aggressive and add more quality hitters to a batting lineup that had faded dramatically while the gritty Tigs blew a 14-game lead down the stretch last season.

One thing to consider is that second baseman Gleyber Torres accepted the Tigers' qualifying offer (as did starting pitcher Jack Flaherty), instead of entering free agency.

We'll never know just how much the Tigers wanted Torres to return to the team or whether they wanted to see him leave via free agency.

But they had to know there was a good chance that Torres would accept their offer.

His return not only absorbed some of the team's monetary resources, it also eliminated one position that could've been filled with a free agent, ensuring there would be fewer roster changes.

Regardless, there was a common perception among many Tigers fans that the organization was being far too cautious and too thrifty in their pursuit of top talent for the 2026 season.

Those feelings were further exacerbated

last December when Tigers President of Baseball Operations Scott Harris said, "Just because a lot of the names look the same doesn't mean the team is the same."

Harris stressed that this was all part of believing in the organization's player-development plan.

"From the day I got here," Harris said, "I articulated a vision that is built around development. If we're going to build around development, this is what it looks like. If you chart the course of this team over the past three years, I think one of the things you'll notice is that individually guys change and with the team they change."

It's not hard to argue that Tigers fans probably needed to reflect a bit. Ten years ago, the organization had been highly successful year in and year out for a decade.

After that, though, things completely bottomed out. The team wasn't very good and didn't appear to have a cohesive organizational plan for future success.

Some of that would change just in the process of performing an organizational reset.

Great expectations

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Tigers reaching the World Series. That 2006 team was a memorably wonderful surprise that captured the imagination of the entire Tigers fan base.

How sports fans engage with the game has changed over time, with fans now seemingly more inclined to equate championships with success.

And, of course, now we have to recognize how the social media machine directly affects fans' perceptions of their favorite teams.

The current Tigers team does appear to have a reasonably durable plan, and it's getting widely recognized for its success with scouting and developing talent.

For example, the Tigers currently have three of the top 100 prospects in baseball (Kevin McGonigle, Max Clark, and Josue

Briceño) in their organization.

Blowing that 14-game lead last year after 2024's magical end-of-season run provided an alarming contrast that eroded many fans' faith in the direction of the franchise.

But those fans seem to forget that the Tigers are still a team that won a postseason series each of the last two seasons.

This chain of events ultimately tried fans' patience and skewed their perception of the team on the cusp of the 2026 season.

And even with the distinct possibility that superstar Tarik Skubal will leave for greener pastures next season, the organization still appears to be healthy enough to withstand his eventual loss.

Tigers fans might've also felt that Scott Harris was patronizing them by suggesting that even with the return of so many familiar players this season, the team would still be fundamentally different.

But it seems obvious that Harris thinks the current roster is young enough that it should be qualitatively improved as part of the Tigers' overarching player-development plan.

As Tigers fans know, 2026 is also the 20th anniversary of the team's march to the World Series, even though expectations were pretty low entering that season.

But one similarity between that team and this year's Tigers is that the organization in 2006 had begun developing some quality young talent and sped up their competitive process by being aggressive with creative trades and spending in free agency.

The arrival and development of players in that era like Curtis Granderson, Brandon Inge, Craig Monroe, Justin Verlander, Jeremy Bonderman, Nate Robertson, and Joel Zumaya signified that something different was starting to happen.

After last year's bitter playoff loss at the hands of the Seattle Mariners in the ALDS, it was unclear to many Tigers fans over the winter whether the team was willing to try to take things to the next level with the addition of some top-flight talent.

Who the hell had Verlander on their bingo card?

In a rapid turn of events just before the start of spring training this year, Tigers fans' impatience was quickly replaced with excitement when the team signed free-agent frontline starter Framer Valdez and brought back all-time Tigers pitching great Justin Verlander.

We did not see that coming!

Now alongside Tarik Skubal, Valdez gives the Tigers one of MLB's best pitch-



A.J. Hinch.

TOM HAGERTY

ing tandems atop their rotation.

After a frustrating 2025, Valdez was probably a good candidate for a change of scenery.

Many fans questioned his character after an incident between him and an Astros catcher last year where it appeared that Valdez intentionally threw at the catcher (“crossing him up”) out of anger or disagreement.

Both players deny that’s what happened and have said the incident was purely accidental. But the video looks pretty damning of Valdez.

That aside, Valdez now offers the Tigers another top left-hander who pitches a lot of quality innings. He strikes out a fair number of hitters, while also inducing a lot of ground-ball outs.

It’ll be an added organizational challenge for the Tigers’ limited infield defense to capably defend the flurry of ground balls that come when Valdez is on the mound.

And it’ll be interesting to see how the Tigers address this potential liability moving forward.

Justin Verlander’s return on the 20th anniversary of the 2006 World Series team is more than just honorary.

With the unfortunate injuries to Tigers pitchers Reese Olson and Jackson Jobe, Verlander slots in to replace them.

While Verlander had some early-season struggles with the Giants last year, he was among the best pitchers in baseball down the stretch.

At 43, Verlander is now the oldest active player in MLB. He also seems to have matured enough that he’s more willing to provide veteran leadership and a model for pursuing success.

2026 Justin Verlander is a much different individual than the 2006 version.

After years of trying hard to find frontline starters in the MLB draft (Kyle Sleeth, Kenny Baugh, et al.), the Tigers absolutely hit it out of the park by getting the opportunity to add someone with the prodigious physical gifts and relentless competitive makeup that Verlander so clearly possessed.

He exploded onto the scene in 2006 and directly impacted the team’s fortunes. It remains to be seen this season if he can take on a role similar to 2006 staff ace Kenny Rogers.

We do know that like another new Tiger (Kenley Jansen, 500 saves), Verlander is still chasing a major milestone of 300 career victories (he had 34 more to go before his first scheduled start March 30).

That makes us think they’ll each still have considerable extrinsic motivation.

Adding superstar pitcher Framer Valdez to the roster this year could be comparable to the Tigers signing Pudge Rodriguez back in 2004 or to Magglio Ordonez, who immediately gave the organization credibility when the Tigers signed him in 2005.

Players of that esteem and high production level exert a strong influence on their teammates and dramatically alter the culture of a franchise.

It wouldn’t surprise me to see Tarik Skubal even *more* driven to excel with Valdez and Verlander now joining him in the rotation.

The road to redemption runs through Detroit

Even though current Tigers manager A.J. Hinch and 2006 Tigers skipper Jim Leyland are from different eras, there are some superficial similarities.

The two men have very different demeanors, but have each earned a high level of respect from their players.

Part of that respect comes from each of them winning a World Series (Leyland with the Marlins in 1997 and Hinch with the Astros in 2017), but also with their ability to communicate directly with their players.

They each overcame some pretty major personal adversity in their careers before getting hired by the Tigers.

In 1999, Leyland retired after just one season with the Colorado Rockies, with two years remaining on his deal — and he got considerable criticism for it.

In 2020, Hinch was suspended for his role in the Houston Astros’ sign-stealing scandal, which was minimal. Hinch was punished for failing to stop the team’s guilty parties from cheating.

In each case, the managers’ first job back on the bench was with the Tigers. Not only did each bring a culture of success with them, but the teams instantly became qualitatively different upon their arrival.

While 2006 was Leyland’s first year in the Comerica Park dugout, Hinch is now in his sixth season as Tigers manager.

How do you spell relief?

Bolstered by the additions of Verlander and Valdez this year, the Tigers’ scouting department might’ve uncovered a couple of additional pitching gems who could make a big difference this year — if they can sustain their early successes.

When the Tigers brought right-handed hurler Drew Anderson back from South Korea, there was a collective shrug of the shoulders from the fan base.

Anderson was a former Tigers minor leaguer who’d done very little to distinguish himself before going to play in Asia.

But the book on Anderson was that he’d made some significant changes to his repertoire in South Korea. Not only did he gain some velocity, but he was now throwing a pitch called a “kick change-up.”

A “kick change” is a deceptive tumbler of a pitch comparable to a split-finger fastball.

And hitters seem mystified by it.

The Tigers added another veteran of South Korean baseball, left-handed reliever Enmanuel De Jesus. De Jesus has looked promising with the Tigers so far, nailing down his first major-league victory against the San Diego Padres Friday night, and he also captured a lot of attention starring for the Venezuelan team in the World Baseball Classic last month.

Hopefully, De Jesus can continue his run of success and become a surprise contributor for the Tigers this season.

This season marks the first time that both Anderson and De Jesus have been on an MLB roster for Opening Day. But it won’t be the first Opening Day for another Tigers acquisition. Kenley Jansen, a native of Curaçao, will likely be the Tigers’ nominal closer, even though Hinch will likely still manage the end of games according to leverage and matchup.

With Jansen needing just 23 more career saves (as of March 30) to reach 500, it’s hard to believe he would’ve signed with the Tigers without some assurance that he’d have a crack at that milestone.

Do you believe in magic?

The Tigers have clearly bolstered their pitching staff for 2026, but fans are still concerned about the team’s batting lineup and run-scoring potential.

When Scott Harris said the team is not the same, part of what he was hinting at is player development. It also could’ve been no small amount of foreshadowing that the consensus MLB number 2 prospect, 21-year-old Kevin McGonigle, would eventually make the team out of spring training — and he did.

From the day McGonigle was drafted in 2023, observers have been in quiet (and not so quiet) awe of his mental makeup, his approach at the plate, and his raw ability to hit.

The only questions that anyone seems to have had would be whether McGonigle’s defense would be good enough for him to remain at shortstop.

But his defense throughout spring training — and so far in the regular season — has been a measurable asset for the team, at both shortstop and third base.

Valdez, in particular, stands to benefit from McGonigle’s presence on the team.

Not only did the precocious McGonigle prove he’s ready for the big leagues, but with the MLB PPI (Prospect Promotion Incentive) now in place, if he wins American League Rookie of the Year, the Tigers will also receive an additional draft pick.

Of course, the team doesn’t want to put any undue pressure or great expectations on his shoulders just yet, even if many Tigers fans will.

“We don’t need him to be the savior,” Harris said. “We don’t need him to carry

us. We just need him to help us. This roster is pretty darn good with or without him. We just think it’s better with him on it — that’s why he’s here.”

The roster is indeed pretty darn good now. And even though he’s only been in the big leagues for a week, McGonigle has the potential to be one of the two or three best hitters on the team.

The superlative defense that McGonigle played in spring training was an added bonus, considering the less than firm grasp the Tigers’ other infielders have on both shortstop and third base.

Another Tiger whose defense is virtually indispensable is center fielder Parker Meadows.

At the end of 2024, Meadows looked to have the makings of a star. But his injury-riddled 2025 season was a bit of a letdown.

This season, the organization might be able to accept a little less offensive production in exchange for Meadows just staying healthy and playing his brand of stellar outfield defense.

Valuable Tigers utility man Matt Vierling is also coming off an injury-filled 2025. But now that he’s healthy again, Vierling should provide versatility and a much-needed right-handed bat in a heavily left-handed hitting lineup.

The team’s core of incumbent players has accumulated a lot of valuable big-league experience, especially in two heartbreaking playoff losses in successive seasons where they came so close to winning the division series.

Unlike the 2006 Tigers, this 2026 team is fairly battle-tested, and several of its players are closer to the prime of their careers.

Where 2006 was an amazing surprise and a rallying point for a much more economically depressed and still rebounding Detroit, this 2026 team has the experience and capability to seize the moment and carry some of the mantle of the 2006 Tigers.

To do that, they’ll have to defy some of this offseason’s cynicism and negativity and restore some of the dormant faith and excitement that fans want to experience again.

The 2006 team ultimately lost to St. Louis in the World Series, and this 2026 club might not win it all either.

But that in no way should rob fans of enjoying a breakout rookie season from Kevin McGonigle or relishing in the successes of one of the best pitching rotations in baseball.

In 2006, I was so stunned by Magglio Ordonez’s walk-off home run in the ALCS that I dropped to my knees with tears in my eyes.

That’s where the magic of baseball resides, for those who truly love the game, warts and all. **M**

WHAT'S GOING ON

LISTINGS

Select events happening in metro Detroit this week. Be sure to check venue websites before all events for the latest information. Add your event to our online calendar: metrotimes.com/AddEvent.

MUSIC

Wednesday Apr 1

Live/Concert

Cubist Agenda 8 pm-midnight; First Place Lounge, 16921 Harper Ave, Detroit; No Cover.

Dead Air Divine 6 pm; Sanctuary Detroit, 2932 Caniff St., Hamtramck;

Emperor: The Emperial Wrath Tour 6:30 pm; The Fillmore, 2115 Woodward Ave., Detroit;

The Function with DJ Dez Andres 9 pm-2 am; Northern Lights Lounge, 660 W. Baltimore St., Detroit; no cover.

Cubist Agenda 8 pm-midnight; First Place Lounge, 16921 Harper Ave, Detroit; No Cover.

The Function with DJ Dez Andres 9 pm-2 am; Northern Lights Lounge, 660 W. Baltimore St., Detroit; no cover.
DJ/Dance

Planet Funk 7-10 pm; Spkr Box, 200 Grand River, Detroit;

Way Back Wednesdays w. DJ Righteous 8 am-11:59 pm; New Dodge Lounge, 8850 Joseph Campau Ave., Hamtramck; 5.
Karaoke/Open Mic
Continuing This Week Karaoke/
Open Mic

Hump Day Karaoke & Music Trivia 8 pm-1 am; Pronto! Royal Oak, 608 S. Washington, Royal Oak; No Cover.

Thursday Apr 2

Live/Concert

Andy Hull , Brother Bird 7 pm; The Loving Touch, 22634 Woodward Ave., Ferndale;

Dueling Pianos: An Interactive Entertainment Experience 8 pm-midnight; AXIS Lounge, 1777 3rd St., Detroit;

First Thursdays wsg The Expedition 9 pm; Bowlero Lanes & Lounge, 4209 Coolidge Hwy., Royal Oak; o.

Hirax, Savage Master, Desolus 6 pm; Sanctuary Detroit, 2932 Caniff St., Hamtramck;

Our Lady Peace: 30th Anniversary Tour w/ Special Guests The Verve Pipe 7 pm; The Fillmore, 2115 Woodward Ave., Detroit;

Dueling Pianos: An Interactive Entertainment Experience 8

pm-midnight; AXIS Lounge, 1777 3rd St., Detroit;
DJ/Dance

Curated Cool 7-10 pm; Spkr Box, 200 Grand River, Detroit;
Karaoke/Open Mic
Continuing This Week Karaoke/
Open Mic

Drag Queen Karaoke 8 pm-2 am; Woodward Avenue Brewers, 22646 Woodward Ave., Ferndale; no cover.

Elixer: DJs John Ryan and GEO 8 pm-midnight; Northern Lights Lounge, 660 W. Baltimore St., Detroit; No cover.

Friday Apr 3

Live/Concert

Armageddon - Def Leppard Tribute, Ratt Trap - Tribute to RATT, AC/DC Tribute - POWERAGE 7:30 pm; The Token Lounge, 28949 Joy Rd., Westland;

Boys 4 Life Tour 8 pm; Little Caesars Arena, 2645 Woodward Ave., Detroit;

Dead7, Wiltwithier 6 pm; Sanctuary Detroit, 2932 Caniff St., Hamtramck;

DRAIN 6 pm; Russell Industrial Complex-Exhibition Center, 1600 Clay St., Detroit;

Friday Night Jam — Live Music at The Wildermere Featuring The Jerome Clark Trio 8-midnight; The Wildemere Bar & Grill, 3143 W. Mnichols, Detroit, MI; Free.

Left Lane Cruiser with special guests 7 pm; Small's, 10339 Conant St., Hamtramck;

Lit & Fuel 8 pm; Sound Board, 2901 Grand River Ave., Detroit;

Magic Bag Presents: Hallowed Hearts: An Emo Night 8 pm; Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave., Ferndale;

Matt Pryor & The Salton Sea, Small Uncle 7 pm; The Loving Touch, 22634 Woodward Ave., Ferndale;

Meet Loaf – The Ultimate Meat Loaf Tribute 8 pm; Emerald Theatre, 31 N. Walnut St., Mount Clemens;

Saddle Up Bunnies 8 pm; Diamondback Music Hall, 49345 S. Interstate 94 Service Dr., Belleville;

The Wonder Years 6 pm; Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress St., Detroit;

Tribute to The MC5 The American Ruse / Bogdon / Absentees 7:30 pm; The Token Lounge, 28949 Joy Rd., Westland;

Tribute to The MC5 The American Ruse / Bogdon / Absentees 7:30 pm; The Token Lounge, 28949 Joy

Rd., Westland;

Friday Night Jam — Live Music at The Wildermere Featuring The Jerome Clark Trio 8-midnight; The Wildemere Bar & Grill, 3143 W. Mnichols, Detroit, MI; Free.
DJ/Dance

Fiesta Friday | DJ Tony Toca & first Friday of every month, 10 pm-2 am; Pronto! Royal Oak, 608 S. Washington, Royal Oak;

Open Air Fridays 4-10 pm; Woodbridge Pub, 5169 Trumbull St., Detroit; o.

A Proper Axe w/ Stick Boovy + G-Spot April 3, 9 pm; Bowlero Lanes & Lounge, 4209 Coolidge Hwy., Royal Oak; o.

Saturday Apr 4

Live/Concert

Tribute to The MC5 The American Ruse / Bogdon / Absentees 7:30 pm; The Token Lounge, 28949 Joy Rd., Westland;

Ashnikko: Smoochies Tour 7 pm; The Fillmore, 2115 Woodward Ave., Detroit;

Bob Dylan 6:30 pm; Detroit Masonic Temple Library, 500 Temple St, Detroit;

I SEE STARS SPIN THE WHEEL TOUR 6 pm; Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress St., Detroit;

Machine Girl 7 pm; Russell Industrial Complex-Exhibition Center, 1600 Clay St., Detroit;

Magic Bag Presents: MEGA 80s 7 pm; Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave., Ferndale;

Poison the Well "Peace in Place" Tour 6 pm; Pike Room, 1 S. Saginaw, Pontiac;

Saddle Up Y'allalternative 8 pm; Diamondback Music Hall, 49345 S. Interstate 94 Service Dr., Belleville;

Tierney Sutton and Tamir Hendelman 7-10 pm; The Blue LLama Jazz Club, 314 S. Main St., Ann Arbor; \$95 or \$50.

Tribute to The MC5 The American Ruse / Bogdon / Absentees 7:30 pm; The Token Lounge, 28949 Joy Rd., Westland;
DJ/Dance

Airjob and Eddie Logix celebrate vinyl release of '1000 Dollars' on 404 Day April 4, 4:04-8 pm; Motor City Street Dance Academy, 6509 Michigan Ave, Detroit; No cover.

Before & Afters: Marathon Set by autogyro April 4, 10 pm; The Eagle of Detroit, 950 W. McNichols Rd., Detroit; \$10 Before (entry before 2am) \$20 afters.

Macho City Presents: BIG FUN 1 Year Anniversary April 4, 10 pm; UFO Bar, 2110 Trumbull Ave., Detroit; \$10 advance, \$15 at the door.

Birds From Dinosaurs w/ The Tread Lightlies + DJ Tony Drake April 4, 9 pm; Bowlero Lanes & Lounge, 4209 Coolidge Hwy., Royal Oak; o.

Midnight City - Indie Dance Party April 4, noon-2 am; 215 West, 215 W. Nine Mile Rd., Ferndale; \$5.

Saturday Grind 11 am-3 pm; Spkr Box, 200 Grand River, Detroit;

Saturday Grind 11 am-3 pm; Spkr Box, 200 Grand River, Detroit;

Sunday Apr 5

Live/Concert

Locked Shut, Bad World 7 pm; Sanctuary Detroit, 2932 Caniff St., Hamtramck;

Phil Ogilvie's Rhythm Kings 5-8 pm; Zal Gaz Grotto Club, 2070 W. Stadium Blvd., Ann Arbor; No Cover (tipjar for the band).

Phil Ogilvie's Rhythm Kings 5-8 pm; Zal Gaz Grotto Club, 2070 W. Stadium Blvd., Ann Arbor; No Cover (tipjar for the band).
DJ/Dance

SPKR BRNCH 11 am-3 pm; Spkr Box, 200 Grand River, Detroit;
Karaoke/Open Mic
Continuing This Week Karaoke/
Open Mic

Sunday Service Karaoke Hosted by Sister DJ Larry 8 pm-1 am; Pronto! Royal Oak, 608 S. Washington, Royal Oak; No Cover.

Sunday Service Karaoke | DJ Larry noon-1 am; Pronto! Royal Oak, 608 S. Washington, Royal Oak; No Cover.

Monday Apr 6

Live/Concert

BOYS LIKE GIRLS - The Soundtrack Of Your Life Tour 6 pm; The Fillmore, 2115 Woodward Ave., Detroit;

kwn 7 pm; Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress St., Detroit;

The Preservation of Jazz Monday Night Music Series presents the 30th Anniversary of the Billie Holiday Tribute ft. Sky Covington 7:30-10 pm; Aretha's Jazz Cafe, 350 Madison St., Detroit; 40.00.

Sheer Terror, School Drugs 7 pm; Sanctuary Detroit, 2932 Caniff St., Hamtramck;

Sky Covington's Preservation of Jazz Monday Night Music Series, Tributes 7:30-10 pm; Aretha's Jazz

Cafe, 350 Madison St., Detroit; \$35-\$40.

Sky Covington's Preservation of Jazz Monday Night Music Series, Tributes 7:30-10 pm; Aretha's Jazz Cafe, 350 Madison St., Detroit; \$35-\$40. DJ/Dance

Adult Skate Night 8:30-11 pm; Lexus Velodrome, 601 Mack Ave., Detroit; \$5.

Tuesday Apr 7
Live/Concert

Sean Blackman's In Transit 7-10 pm; Northern Lights Lounge, 660 W. Baltimore St., Detroit; no cover.

Sean Blackman's In Transit 7-10 pm; Northern Lights Lounge, 660 W. Baltimore St., Detroit; no cover. Karaoke/Open Mic
Continuing This Week Karaoke/ Open Mic

Open Mic : Art in a Fly Space 7-10 pm; Detroit Shipping Company, 474 Peterboro St., Detroit; no cover.

VIP Tuesday Night Karaoke 9 pm-1 am; Pronto! Royal Oak, 608 S. Washington, Royal Oak; No Cover.

Wednesday Apr 8
Live/Concert

Cubist Agenda 8 pm-midnight; First Place Lounge, 16921 Harper Ave, Detroit; No Cover.

The Function with DJ Dez Andres 9 pm-2 am; Northern Lights Lounge, 660 W. Baltimore St., Detroit; no cover.

Cubist Agenda 8 pm-midnight; First Place Lounge, 16921 Harper Ave, Detroit; No Cover.

The Function with DJ Dez Andres 9 pm-2 am; Northern Lights Lounge, 660 W. Baltimore St., Detroit; no cover.

Khary 7 pm; Sanctuary Detroit, 2932 Caniff St., Hamtramck;

The Brook & The Bluff: The Werewolf Tour 7 pm; Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress St., Detroit; DJ/Dance

Planet Funk 7-10 pm; Spkr Box, 200 Grand River, Detroit;

Way Back Wednesdays w. DJ Righteous 8 am-11:59 pm; New Dodge Lounge, 8850 Joseph Campau Ave., Hamtramck; 5. Karaoke/Open Mic
Continuing This Week Karaoke/ Open Mic

Hump Day Karaoke & Music Trivia 8 pm-1 am; Pronto! Royal Oak, 608 S. Washington, Royal Oak; No Cover.

Thursday Apr 9
Live/Concert

Dueling Pianos: An Interactive Entertainment Experience 8 pm-midnight; AXIS Lounge, 1777 3rd St., Detroit;

Dueling Pianos: An Interactive Entertainment Experience 8 pm-midnight; AXIS Lounge, 1777 3rd St., Detroit;

Hunter Hayes: The Evergreen Tour 7 pm; Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress St., Detroit; DJ/Dance

Curated Cool 7-10 pm; Spkr Box, 200 Grand River, Detroit; Karaoke/Open Mic
Continuing This Week Karaoke/ Open Mic

Drag Queen Karaoke 8 pm-2 am; Woodward Avenue Brewers, 22646 Woodward Ave., Ferndale; no cover.

Elixer: DJs John Ryan and GEO 8 pm-midnight; Northern Lights Lounge, 660 W. Baltimore St., Detroit; No cover.

Friday Apr 10
Live/Concert

Friday Night Jam — Live Music at The Wildermere Featuring The Jerome Clark Trio 8-midnight; The Wildemere Bar & Grill, 3143 W. Mnichols, Detroit, MI; Free.

Bee Gees Gold: The Tribute 8-9:30 pm; FIM Capitol Theatre, 140 E 2nd Street, Flint; Tickets start at \$35 / \$26 for Genesee County residents.

Bleed From Within - The Zenith

Tour - North America 6 pm; Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress St., Detroit;

The Fab Faux Presents The Glorious Hodgepodge Show 8-11 pm; Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty Street, Ann Arbor; \$65.30-\$147.25.

Friday Night Jam — Live Music at The Wildermere Featuring The Jerome Clark Trio 8-midnight; The Wildemere Bar & Grill, 3143 W. Mnichols, Detroit, MI; Free.

Jeffrey Osborne 8 pm; The Music Hall, 350 Madison Ave., Detroit;

KASHUS CULPEPPER 7 pm; District 142, 142 Maple St., Wyandotte;

Magic Bag Presents: HAPPY HOUR DANCE CLUB - Ladies Only Dance Party 6 pm; Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave., Ferndale;

Mick Blankenship 7:30 pm; The Token Lounge, 28949 Joy Rd., Westland;

Microwave w/ Anthony Green 6 pm; Garden Bowl, 4120 Woodward, Detroit;

The Dramatics featuring L.J. Reynolds 8 pm; Sound Board, 2901 Grand River Ave., Detroit;

TWICE [THIS IS FOR] WORLD TOUR IN DETROIT

Wendell Harrison & Tribe presents A Tribute to Pharoah Sanders 7-10:30 pm; The Blue LLama Jazz Club, 314 S. Main St., Ann Arbor; \$25 each. DJ/Dance

Ann Arbor Ecstatic Dance second Friday of every month, 7:30-10:30 pm; Ringstar Studio, 3907 Varsity Dr, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48108, Ann Arbor; \$25-40 (\$5 discount for cash).

Broadway Rave April 10, 7-9 pm; The Loving Touch, 22634 Woodward Ave., Ferndale; \$17.00.

Open Air Fridays 4-10 pm; Woodbridge Pub, 5169 Trumbull St., Detroit; o.

Paxton/Spangler Band + DJ Captain Mike April 10, 9 pm; Bowlero

Lanes & Lounge, 4209 Coolidge Hwy., Royal Oak; o.

Saturday Apr 11
Live/Concert

80s Party 4a Purpose Charity Event 7 pm; Emerald Theatre, 31 N. Walnut St., Mount Clemens;

A CABARET TRIBUTE TO BOB SEGER 7-9:30 pm; Boardwalk Theatre, 109 S 3rd St, St. Clair; \$30.

Classic Seger: Bob Seger's Greatest Hits Live! 8 pm; The Music Hall, 350 Madison Ave., Detroit;

Dead Buds, FROSTisRAD, Pesky Kid, Midnights Motive 7 pm; The Loving Touch, 22634 Woodward Ave., Ferndale;

Fire Lake - Bob Seger Tribute, Marz Radio 7:30 & 7:45 pm; The Token Lounge, 28949 Joy Rd., Westland;

Former Critics 6 pm; Pike Room, 1 S. Saginaw, Pontiac;

John Pizzarelli: Back by Popular Demand 6:30-8 & 8:45-10 pm; General Admission - 77.00.

Let's Sing Taylor 3 pm; Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W. Fourth St., Royal Oak;

Magic Bag Presents: Lyons Lane 7 pm; Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave., Ferndale;

Major Dudes Celebrate Royal Scam at 50 8-10 pm; Ground Control at Major Tomato, 6547 Allen Rd., Allen Park; \$20.00.

Paul Anka 8 pm; Caesars Palace Windsor - Augustus Ballroom, 377 E. Riverside Dr., Windsor;

Paul Anka Ticket + Hotel Deals 8 pm; Caesars Palace Windsor - Augustus Ballroom, 377 E. Riverside Dr., Windsor;

Saddle Up & Lift Em' Up! 8 pm; Diamondback Music Hall, 49345 S. Interstate 94 Service Dr., Belleville;

The Maine w/ Grayscale 5:30 pm; Cathedral Theatre at the Masonic Temple, 500 Temple St., Detroit; DJ/Dance



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Megan Hamilton - Late Night After's - Tangent Gallery April 11, 10 pm; Tangent Gallery & Hastings Street Ballroom, 715 E. Milwaukee Ave., Detroit; \$25.

Peekaboo April 11, 8 pm; Russell Industrial Complex-Exhibition Center, 1600 Clay St., Detroit;

Saturday Grind 11 am-3 pm; Spkr Box, 200 Grand River, Detroit;

Saturday Grind 11 am-3 pm; Spkr Box, 200 Grand River, Detroit;

The Whiskey Charmers w/ The Gashounds + DJ MATTATTACK! & DJ STEVIESAIDSO April 11, 9 pm; Bowlero Lanes & Lounge, 4209 Coolidge Hwy., Royal Oak; o.

Sunday Apr 12
Live/Concert

Phil Ogilvie's Rhythm Kings 5-8 pm; Zal Gaz Grotto Club, 2070 W. Stadium Blvd., Ann Arbor; No Cover (tipjar for the band).

CARRY ON - A Tribute to CROSBY STILLS NASH & YOUNG 5:30 & 6:30 pm; The Token Lounge, 28949 Joy Rd., Westland;

Good Kid 7 pm; Cathedral Theatre at the Masonic Temple, 500 Temple St., Detroit;

Health w/ Carpenter Brut 6:30 pm; Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W. Fourth St., Royal Oak;

Josh Garrels with special guest Taylor Armstrong 6 pm; Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress St., Detroit;

Phil Ogilvie's Rhythm Kings 5-8 pm; Zal Gaz Grotto Club, 2070 W. Stadium Blvd., Ann Arbor; No Cover (tipjar for the band).

Rahsaan Patterson 7:30 pm; Sound Board, 2901 Grand River Ave., Detroit;

Raven, Slackjaw 6 pm; Sanctuary Detroit, 2932 Caniff St., Hamtramck; DJ/Dance

SPKR BRNCH 11 am-3 pm; Spkr Box, 200 Grand River, Detroit; Karaoke/Open Mic Continuing This Week Karaoke/Open Mic

Sunday Service Karaoke Hosted by Sister DJ Larry 8 pm-1 am; Pronto! Royal Oak, 608 S. Washington, Royal Oak; No Cover.

Sunday Service Karaoke | DJ Larry noon-1 am; Pronto! Royal Oak, 608 S. Washington, Royal Oak; No Cover.

Monday Apr 13
Live/Concert

Sky Covington's Preservation of Jazz Monday Night Music Series,

Tributes 7:30-10 pm; Aretha's Jazz Cafe, 350 Madison St., Detroit; \$35-\$40.

Florence + The Machine - Everybody Scream Tour 7:30 pm; Little Caesars Arena, 2645 Woodward Ave., Detroit;

High Desert Queen, Gran Moreno 6 pm; Sanctuary Detroit, 2932 Caniff St., Hamtramck;

Kickstand Productions Presents: Jae Stephens w/ Special Guests TBA 7 pm; Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave., Ferndale;

Sky Covington's Preservation of Jazz Monday Night Music Series presents The Bessie Smith Tribute ft. The Queen of Blues Thoretta Davis 7:30-10 pm; Aretha's Jazz Cafe, 350 Madison St., Detroit; 40.00.

Sky Covington's Preservation of Jazz Monday Night Music Series, Tributes 7:30-10 pm; Aretha's Jazz Cafe, 350 Madison St., Detroit; \$35-\$40. DJ/Dance

Adult Skate Night 8:30-11 pm; Lexus Velodrome, 601 Mack Ave., Detroit; \$5.

Tuesday Apr 14
Live/Concert

Sean Blackman's In Transit 7-10 pm; Northern Lights Lounge, 660 W. Baltimore St., Detroit; no cover.

BRENN! - The Warm Up Tour 7 pm; The Shelter, 431 E. Congress St., Detroit;

Pat Metheny 7 pm; Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W. Fourth St., Royal Oak;

Sean Blackman's In Transit 7-10 pm; Northern Lights Lounge, 660 W. Baltimore St., Detroit; no cover.

The Meteors 7 pm; Sanctuary Detroit, 2932 Caniff St., Hamtramck; DJ/Dance

Soul Tone second Tuesday of every month, 9 pm-2 am; The High Dive, 11474 Joseph Campau Ave., Hamtramck; Karaoke/Open Mic Continuing This Week Karaoke/Open Mic

Open Mic : Art in a Fly Space 7-10 pm; Detroit Shipping Company, 474 Peterboro St., Detroit; no cover.

VIP Tuesday Night Karaoke 9 pm-1 am; Pronto! Royal Oak, 608 S. Washington, Royal Oak; No Cover.

THEATER

Performance

Detroit Repertory Theatre Eclipsed ECLIPSED a play by Danai Gurira, directed by Shavonne Coleman. Five extraordinary women struggle to negotiate power, protection, and peace as

they fight to survive in the Liberian Civil War. From actress-playwright Danai Gurira (BLACK PANTHER, THE WALKING DEAD), this gripping play unearths the wreckage of war, celebrating women navigating the most hostile of circumstances. \$30 advance / \$35 same day Fridays, Saturdays, 8-10 pm, Saturdays, 3-5 pm and Sundays, 2-3 pm.

Embassy Suites by Hilton Detroit Troy Auburn Hills The Magic Soiree - magic and comedy dinner show Magic and comedy show! The fun starts when you are shown to your table in The Atrium Bar and Grill. Close-up magic will be happening at your table. During this time dinner and drinks are available to purchase. Please order as soon as you arrive, so our fabulous magicians can work their mind-blowing magic right before your eyes. Then, step into our intimate 50-seat theater for an evening of astonishing illusions, hilarious entertainment. Our incredible stage show is guaranteed to leave you mesmerized! Early Soiree arrive at 5.15pm or Late Soiree arrive at 7.15pm See all our 5star reviews \$40 and VIP tickets \$45 Saturday April 4, 5:15-8 & 7:15-10 pm.; We host 2 Magic Soiree's 5.15pm and 7.15pm The fun starts when you are shown to your table in The Atrium Bar and Grill. Close-up magic will be happening at your table. During this time dinner and drinks are available to purchase. Please order as soon as you arrive, so our fabulous magicians can work their mind-blowing magic right before your eyes. Then, step into our intimate 50-seat theater for an evening of astonishing illusions, hilarious entertainment. Our incredible stage show is guaranteed to leave you mesmerized! \$40 and VIP tickets \$45 Saturdays, 5:15-10 pm.

Flagstar Strand Theatre for the Performing Arts CIRCUS POP! The Giant Bubble Show Prepare to be mesmerized by CIRCUS POP! The Giant Bubble Show, featuring the extraordinary talents of Logan Jimenez. This thrilling one-man extravaganza combines world-class bubble artistry, magic, circus skills, and comedy, promising an unforgettable experience for children of all ages. In this 60-minute spectacle, Logan Jimenez transforms ordinary bubbles into an unbelievable BUBBLE show. Audiences will be spellbound as Logan creates a bubble volcano that erupts bubbles, contorts himself through a tennis racket, places six people inside a single bubble, and creates a bubble snowman that flies over the audience. This show is truly the only show of its kind! 20 Sunday April 12, 2-3 pm.

The Loving Touch The Erotic Poetry

& Music Festival The Erotic Poetry & Music Festival is an eclectic evening of erotic entertainment! It features erotic poetry, music and burlesque performances for an evening you won't forget! This annual event celebrates its' 37th year! 18 & up are welcome. A portion of the proceeds benefits Paw with a Cause which trains leader dogs for the disabled. Over a dozen performers including Satori Circus, Konrad Lee, Carmel Liburdi, Lushes Lamoan, One Single Rose, Magenta DeMure, Sophia Von Stardust, The Impaler and more! Seating available. \$20 Saturday April 4, 7-11 pm.

Monroe County Community College - Meyer Theater The Three Musketeers MCCC's student play this year will be Ken Ludwig's The Three Musketeers, based on the novel by Alexandre Dumas, by special arrangement with Concord Theatricals. Ludwig's celebrated adaptation of the timeless swashbuckler is a tale of heroism, treachery, close escapes and, above all, honor. The Guardian wrote the following about the Ludwig adaptation: "[A] slick, swashbuckling romp that cleverly updates the Dumas novel...distilling its energy and strengthening its timeless appeal." A donation of \$10 per person is suggested Seating is limited to 200 attendees per performance. Reservations open March 6, 2026. Email littletheater@monroeccc.edu for reservations with name, number of attendees, Donation \$10 per person Thursday April 9, 7-9 pm, Friday April 10, 7-9 pm, Saturday April 11, 7-9 pm and Sunday April 12, 1-3 pm.

Theatre NOVA The JonBenét Game by Tori Keenan-Zelt The JonBenét Game by Tori Keenan-Zelt NNPN Rolling World Premiere It's not whether you win or lose... When best friends Molly and Rae were 12, they secretly played JonBenét Ramsey at sleepovers. Twenty years later, in the wake of Molly's tragic death, Rae returns to her hometown school as a guidance counselor. But when Molly's 12-year-old daughter, Hazel, knocks on Rae's door, she and Rae slide back into the game, and the dark and liminal spaces of their unresolved grief. Directed by Carla Milarch. March 27 - April 19, 2026 General \$30 / 65 & Over \$25 / Students \$15 Fridays, Saturdays, 8 pm, Sundays, 2 pm and Saturdays, 3 pm.

Tipping Point Theatre Gene & Gilda | A play by Cary Gitter A charming and witty comedy about the relationship of Hollywood legends, Gene Wilder and Gilda Radner. Tipping Point Theatre presents the Michigan Premiere of "Gene & Gilda" by Cary Gitter. It's

WHAT'S GOING ON CONT'D

Hollywood in the late 1980's and Gene Wilder is giving his first interview after the death of his beloved Gilda Radner. Although he states any discussion of Gilda is off limits, Gilda has other ideas and crashes the interview. The famous couple come to vivid life as we follow them from their first meeting through their personal and professional ups and downs, all the way to their poignant farewell. \$25 - 47 Wednesdays, Sundays, 2-3:30 pm, Thursdays, Fridays, 7:30-9 pm and Saturday April 11, 6-7:30 pm.

University of Detroit Mercy

Student Union I'm Gonna Marry You Tobey Maguire It's 2004. Low-rise jeans reign supreme, AIM away messages are works of art, and Shelby Hinkley is obsessed with one thing and one thing only: Tobey Maguire. But liking Tobey Maguire is not enough. No, Shelby has a plan: kidnap him and then marry him in her basement. What could possibly go wrong? Detroit Mercy Theatre Company presents "I'm Gonna Marry You Tobey Maguire" by Samantha Hurley, playing April 10-19 in the Detroit Mercy Black Box Theatre on University of Detroit's McNichols Campus. Tickets on sale at DetroitMercyArts.com \$10-25 Friday April 10, 6:30 pm, Saturday April 11, 7:30 pm and Sunday April 12, 2 pm. Musical

Detroit Opera House The Lion King (Touring) Wednesday April 1, 7:30 pm, Thursday April 2, 7:30 pm, Friday April 3, 7:30 pm, Saturday April 4, 2 & 7:30 pm and Sunday April 5, 1 & 6:30 pm.

Fisher Theatre - Detroit Suff's (Touring) - Recommended Ages 10 and Up Wednesday April 1, 7:30 pm, Thursday April 2, 7:30 pm, Friday April 3, 7:30 pm, Saturday April 4, 2 & 7:30 pm, Sunday April 5, 1 & 6:30 pm, Tuesday April 7, 7:30 pm, Wednesday April 8, 7:30 pm, Thursday April 9, 7:30 pm, Friday April 10, 7:30 pm, Saturday April 11, 2 & 7:30 pm and Sunday April 12, 1 & 6:30 pm.; Tuesday April 14, 7:30 pm.

Flagstar Strand Theatre for the Performing Arts Waitress: The Musical (The Movie) Friday April 3, 6:30 pm.

Fox Theatre Bat Out of Hell Thursday April 2, 7:30 pm, Friday April 3, 7:30 pm and Saturday April 4, 2 & 7:30 pm.; Thursday April 2, 7:30 pm, Friday April 3, 7:30 pm and Saturday April 4, 2 & 7:30 pm.; Wednesday April 8, 7:30 pm.

Hilberry Gateway - STAGE The SpongeBob Musical Who lives in Hilberry Gateway under the sea? The SpongeBob Musical! Dive into this vibrant underwater adventure for all ages, where friendship (and a splash of optimism) saves the day. SpongeBob and his friends must come together to protect their home when a volcano threatens to destroy Bikini Bottom. Featuring original songs by music legends like Cyndi Lauper, John Legend, and Panic! At the Disco, this musical blends humor, heart, and spectacular high-energy performances. With famous characters and music, this family-friendly show promises an unforgettable journey of courage, community, and the power of positivity. \$20-\$30 Wednesday April 1, 2-4:30 pm, Thursday April 2, 7-9:30 pm, Friday April 3, 7:30-10 pm and Saturday April 4, 2-4:30 & 7:30-10 pm.

Meadow Brook Theatre Come From Away Wednesday April 1, 2 & 7:30 pm, Thursday April 2, 2 & 7:30 pm, Friday April 3, 7:30 pm, Saturday April 4, 6 pm, Sunday April 5, 2 & 6:30 pm, Wednesday April 8, 2 & 7:30 pm, Thursday April 9, 7:30 pm, Friday April 10, 7:30 pm, Saturday April 11, 2 & 7:30 pm and Sunday April 12, 2 pm.

The Back Office Studio Boss Babe: a new musical by Jen Whaley Staged reading of Boss Babe: a new musical by Jen Whaley. Suggested \$10 donation. Free Friday April 3, 8-10 pm and Saturday April 4, 8-10 pm.

The Carr Center Gallery at the Park Shelton Lou Beatty Jr. Legacy Celebration Join us as we celebrate the man of many characters, actor Lou Beatty, Jr. Proceeds will benefit the Carr Center and Rebirth Inc. Live music by saxophonist Stephen Grady Jr. and pianist Jacob Hart. Refreshments will be served. Parking on the street or at the

DIA parking lot on John R. and Kirby. \$50 each Saturday April 11, 6:30-9 pm

COMEDY

Improv

Go Comedy! Improv Theater

Pandemonia The Allstar Showdown is a highly interactive improvised game show. With suggestions from the audience, our two teams will battle for your laughs. The Showdown is like "Whose Line is it Anyway," featuring a series of short improv games, challenges and more. Fridays and Saturdays 7:30pm & 9:30pm 25.00 Fridays, Saturdays.; \$20 Every other Friday, 8 & 10 pm.

Planet Ant Theatre Hip-Prov: Improv with a Dash of Hip-Hop \$10 second Wednesday of every month, 7 pm.

PLANET ANT THEATRE Big Fun Murder "50ish years ago, on this very night, I was murdered." A ghost has one final chance to solve their own murder as they re-live their last day in the 70's. Help them remember what happened and guess at who did it in this completely improvised murder mystery. Each night a special guest victim will get the chance for closure as the audience tries to solve the case! \$30 Friday April 3, 8-9:30 pm, Saturday April 4, 8-9:30 pm, Friday April 10, 8-9:30 pm and Saturday April 11, 8-9:30 pm.

Stand-up

Ann Arbor Comedy Showcase

Hash Bash Comedy Mash Comedy Bingo is a one-of-a-kind stand-up show featuring games, prizes, comedy, and, of course, BINGO! The show features two games happening simultaneously: a traditional bingo game played between comedians' sets, and a signature Comedy Bingo game where audience members receive cards filled with stand-up comedy stereotypes. As comics incorporate those moments into their performances, you mark your card for a chance to win prizes from local businesses. Hosted by Esteban Touma (Comedy Central, NPR) and featuring some of the best comics

in the area and beyond, Comedy Bingo is not your classic grandma's bingo night 10 Wednesday April 1, 7:15 pm.; Jokes On You Comedy --- starring Mike Geeter, Rob Jenkins, Kevin Johnson, Cam Rowe, and Ricarlo Williams, and hosted by Tam White --- brings together a lineup of powerhouse Michigan headliners, each with a completely different vibe. Different style. Different edge. Different energy. Just when you think you've caught your breath, another punchline lands and the whole room erupts again. From razor-sharp wit to big personalities and moments you'll be quoting the next day, this show keeps the momentum rolling from the first joke to the final mic drop. 15 Thursday April 2.; Get ready for a high-energy, no-holds-barred comedy experience as Eyes Up Here Comedy brings together some of the funniest women in the Midwest. With a rotating lineup, every show is fresh, unpredictable, and packed with bold perspectives, big punchlines, and fearless storytelling. Hosting the party is Mike Geeter (Comedy Central), delivering electric energy and razor-sharp crowd work that keeps the entire night buzzing. Featuring Melanie Hearn, Simply Shanel, Shelly Smith, Peggy Beattie Presented by SamRose Entertainment 20 Friday April 3, 7:15 pm.; Alright... Alright, Alright! If you're looking for a night that's higher than your expectations (and actually meets them), this is it. The Hash Bash Comedy Mash rolls up Blain Hill, Kevin Johnson, Brett Mercer, and Emma Stevenson into one perfectly packed lineup. Different styles, different vibes — but they all deliver the good stuff. From slow-burn storytelling to rapid-fire punchlines, these comics know how to spark a room and keep the laughs blazing. Lighting the fuse for the whole night is your host, Mike Geeter, keeping the energy lit, the crowd buzzing, and the transitions smoother than your favorite strain. 20 Saturday April 4, 8:15 pm.

Eastern Palace Club Adam Degi LIVE @ Eastern Palace Club | The Smoke Show Comedy Show Adam

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Degi is a Grand Rapids-based stand-up comedian who headlines clubs and festivals across the Midwest. A longtime fixture of LaughFest, he has released two comedy albums and regularly tours with comedians including The Daily Show's Michael Kosta. \$5 Thursday April 2, 8:30-10 pm.

Imagine Royal Oak Rated R Comedy Show AT Imagine Royal Oak Join us for an unforgettable evening hosted by the charismatic Joseph Fisher, featuring the sharp and hilarious Nicole Melnyk, and headlined by crowd favorite Ryan Brown. Doors open at 6:30 PM so you can grab your seats, concessions, and cocktails before the show kicks off at 7:30 PM. Enjoy your favorite Imagine popcorn, treats, and a full cash bar while you laugh the night away! Tickets: \$25 per seat 25.00 Thursday April 2, 7:30-9:30 pm.

The Independent Comedy Club at Planet Ant STAND UP | I Ain't No Joke - Live at The Independent Comedy Club Diva Cup is the ultimate stand-up comedy improv competition! D-Cup Comedy Competition: "The Last Supper" Forgive us Father... for we are about to sin. The D-Cup Stand-Up Improv Competition returns the night before Good Friday for a holy night of absolute comedy chaos. 30 comedians get ONE minute to pull a mystery prompt from the bucket and make the crowd laugh before their time is up. Topics range from religion, holidays, family, food, sins, miracles, and whatever other blasphemy the comedy gods decide. And this isn't just stand-up — D-Cup goes all out. \$10 Online/\$15 Door Thursday April 2, 9-10:30 pm.; Milan Patel is an LA based stand-up comedian who just performed at the 2025 Netflix introducing Stand Up Showcase. He has been featured at the Netflix is a Joke Festival (2024), the Big Sky Comedy Festival (2024), the Treefort Music Festival (2025), and Flyover Festival (2025). Milan recently booked a role in an upcoming Bandera animated series produced by Greg Daniels and Mike Judge, performed on Adam McKay's climate change awareness show at Dynasty Typewriter, opened for Chris Fleming at the Largo at the Coronet, and can regularly be seen at The Comedy Store. \$20 Online/\$25 Door Thursday April 9, 9-10:30 pm.; Colum Tyrrell (Tonight Show, Legion of Skanks) -- After beginning his career in his home country of Ireland, Colum Tyrrell moved to New York City and quickly became a regular at The Comedy Cellar, The Stand Comedy Club and Stand Up New York. He launched The Colum Tyrrell Podcast in 2022 which is growing to be one of the

more popular shows in New York and he recently made his television debut on The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon. \$20 Online/\$25 Door Friday April 10, 9-9:30 pm.; Hosted by Jacob Russell! Accompanied by a fresh lineup of stand up comedians and a new improv troop every month! \$10 Online/\$15 Door Saturday April 11, 9-10:30 pm.

Little Caesars Arena Katt Williams: The Golden Age Tour Saturday April 4, 8 pm.

Sound Board Luenell with special guest Finesse Thursday April 2, 8 pm.

The Comedy Bar Detroit SUNDAY APRIL 12: DANNY POLISHCHUK Luis J. Gomez is a New York-based comedian and podcast host known for his bold, unapologetic humor. He's the co-host of the wildly popular Legion of Skanks podcast, where he and his fellow comedians dive into unfiltered, often controversial conversations. Luis also hosts The Regz, and Story Warz, where he brings his dynamic energy, sharp wit, and comedic flair to a range of topics. With a loyal fan-base and a strong presence in both comedy and podcasting, Luis is the perfect personality to help connect a brand with a diverse and engaged audience. \$25-\$35 Friday April 10, 7-8:30 pm.; Luis J. Gomez is a New York-based comedian and podcast host known for his bold, unapologetic humor. He's the co-host of the wildly popular Legion of Skanks podcast, where he and his fellow comedians dive into unfiltered, often controversial conversations. Luis also hosts The Regz, and Story Warz, where he brings his dynamic energy, sharp wit, and comedic flair to a range of topics. With a loyal fanbase and a strong presence in both comedy and podcasting, Luis is the perfect personality to help connect a brand with a diverse and engaged audience. \$25-\$35 Saturday April 11, 7-8:15 pm.; Luis J. Gomez is a New York-based comedian and podcast host known for his bold, unapologetic humor. He's the co-host of the wildly popular Legion of Skanks podcast, where he and his fellow comedians dive into unfiltered, often controversial conversations. Luis also hosts The Regz, and Story Warz, where he brings his dynamic energy, sharp wit, and comedic flair to a range of topics. With a loyal fanbase and a strong presence in both comedy and podcasting, Luis is the perfect personality to help connect a brand with a diverse and engaged audience. \$25-\$35 Saturday April 11, 9-10:15 pm.; Danny Polishchuk is a comedian, writer and actor who is known for hit viral sketches which have amassed over a billion views online. He co-hosts the Boyscast with comedian

Ryan Long and hosts the weekly call-in shows Low Value Mail and The Bath House. He's a regular at The Comedy Cellar in New York City and appears as a guest on Fox News Saturday With Jimmy Failla often. \$25-\$35 Sunday April 12, 7-8:15 pm.

Continuing This Week Stand-up

Blind Pig Blind Pig Comedy FREE Mondays, 8 pm.

The Independent Comedy Club at Planet Ant The Sh*t Show Open Mic: Every Friday & Saturday at The Independent A weekly open mic featuring both local amateurs and touring professionals. Doors open at 8:30 p.m. and the show begins at 9 pm.. The evening always ends with karaoke in the attached Ghost Light Bar! Doors and Sign up 8:30 p.m. Show at 9 p.m. \$5 suggested donation. Attached bar Ghost Light opens at 7 p.m. \$5 Suggested Donation Thursdays, 9-10:30 pm.; A late night, heckle encouraged, show up, go up stand-up open mic featuring both local amateurs and touring professionals. Sign up starts at 10:30 and the show begins at 11p. Doors and Sign Up 10:30p | Show at 11p | \$5 Suggested Donation* Attached bar Ghost Light opens at 7p The independent Comedy Club is a comedy club run by comics for comics inside Planet Ant Theatre. The club runs Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, offering independently produced comedy shows from 8p-12a. Presented by Planet Ant *Planet Ant Theatre, Inc. is a 501c3 nonprofit organization; no ticket or reservation is required \$5 Suggested Donation Fridays, Saturdays, 11 pm-1:30 am.

Salt + Ko "Tony Roney's Hilarious Sunday Night Comedy, Every Sunday @ Salt + Ko Inside The Radisson Hotel 26555 Telegraph Rd Southfield, MI. Tony Roney's Hilarious Friday & Saturday Night Comedy, Inside Starters Bar & Grill, 18426 Plymouth Rd Detroit MI. Show Time 8pm. Tickets \$25.00 . This comedy show will showcase Detroit's funniest up and coming comedians. Sponsored by Tony Roney's Comic Vibe. For more info contact Kamilah @ 313 729 0502 or 248 906 6119. 25.00 Fridays, 8-10 pm and Saturdays, 8-10 pm.; Tony Roney's Comic Vibe Presents "Tony Roney's Hilarious Sunday Night Comedy, Every Sunday @ Salt + Ko Inside The Radisson Hotel 26555 Telegraph Rd Southfield, MI. Show Time 8pm. Tickets \$25.00 . This comedy show will showcase Detroit's funniest up and coming comedians. Sponsored by Tony Roney's Comic Vibe. For more info contact Kamilah @ 313 729 0502 or 248 906 6119. #highlightseveryonefollowers, #thingstodothisweekend,

#thingstodoonsaturday, #thingstodoindetroit, #THEKRACKJOKERS, #tonyroneyscomicvibe, #TKJ, #easternmarket, #easternmarketdetroit, #UnitedStatesEvents, #michiganevents, #detroitcomedy, #michiganevents, #detroitperformances, #afterchristmas, #afterchristmascomedy, #newyearcomedy, #DetroitNightLife, #openmiccomedy, #eventbrite, #eventbritetickets, #comedy2026, #comedyindetroit, #newyear2026, #newyearcomedy, #RadissonHotels, #kamilah, #thingstodoonsunday 25 Sundays, 12-7:30 pm.; Tony Roney's Hilarious Sunday Night Comedy, Every Sunday @ Salt + Ko Inside The Radisson Hotel 26555 Telegraph Rd Southfield, MI. Show Time 6pm & 8pm. Tickets \$25.00 . This comedy show will showcase Detroit's funniest up and coming comedians. Sponsored by Tony Roney's Comic Vibe. For more info contact Kamilah @ 313 729 0502 or 248 906 6119. #highlightseveryonefollowers, #thingstodothisweekend, #thingstodoonsaturday, #thingstodoindetroit, #THEKRACKJOKERS, #tonyroneyscomicvibe, #TKJ, #easternmarket, #easternmarketdetroit, #UnitedStatesEvents, #michiganevents, #detroitcomedy, #michiganevents, #detroitperformances, #afterchristmas, #afterchristmascomedy, #newyearcomedy, #DetroitNightLife, #openmiccomedy, #eventbrite, #eventbritetickets, #comedy2026, #tonyroneyshilariousundaynightcomedy, #comedyindetroit, #newyear2026, #newyearcomedy, #RadissonHotels, #kamilah, #thingstodoonsunday, <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1979459688213?aff=oddttdtcreator> <https://patch.com/michigan/detroit/calendar/event/20260111/1e3aa078-38cb-4db6-a8b3-1e977ffad43f/tony-roneys-hilarious-sunday-night-comedy> <https://community.metrotimes.com/event/tony-roneys-hilarious-sunday-night-comedy-every-sunday-salt-ko-inside-the-radisson-hotel-26555-telegraph-rd-southfield-mi-41008277> 25.00 Sundays, 6-7:30 pm.; "Tony Roney's Hilarious Sunday Night Comedy, Every Sunday @ Salt + Ko Inside The Radisson Hotel 26555 Telegraph Rd Southfield, MI. Show Time 6pm & 8pm. Tickets \$25.00. This comedy show will showcase Detroit's funniest up and coming comedians. Sponsored by Tony Roney's Comic Vibe. For more info contact Kamilah @ 313 729 0502 or 248 906 6119. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1979459688213?aff=oddttdtcreator> #highlightseveryonefollowers, #thingstodothisweekend, #thingstodoonsaturday, #thingstodoindetroit, #THEKRACKJOKERS, #tonyroneyscomicvibe, #TKJ, #easternmarket, #easternmarketdetroit, #UnitedSta-

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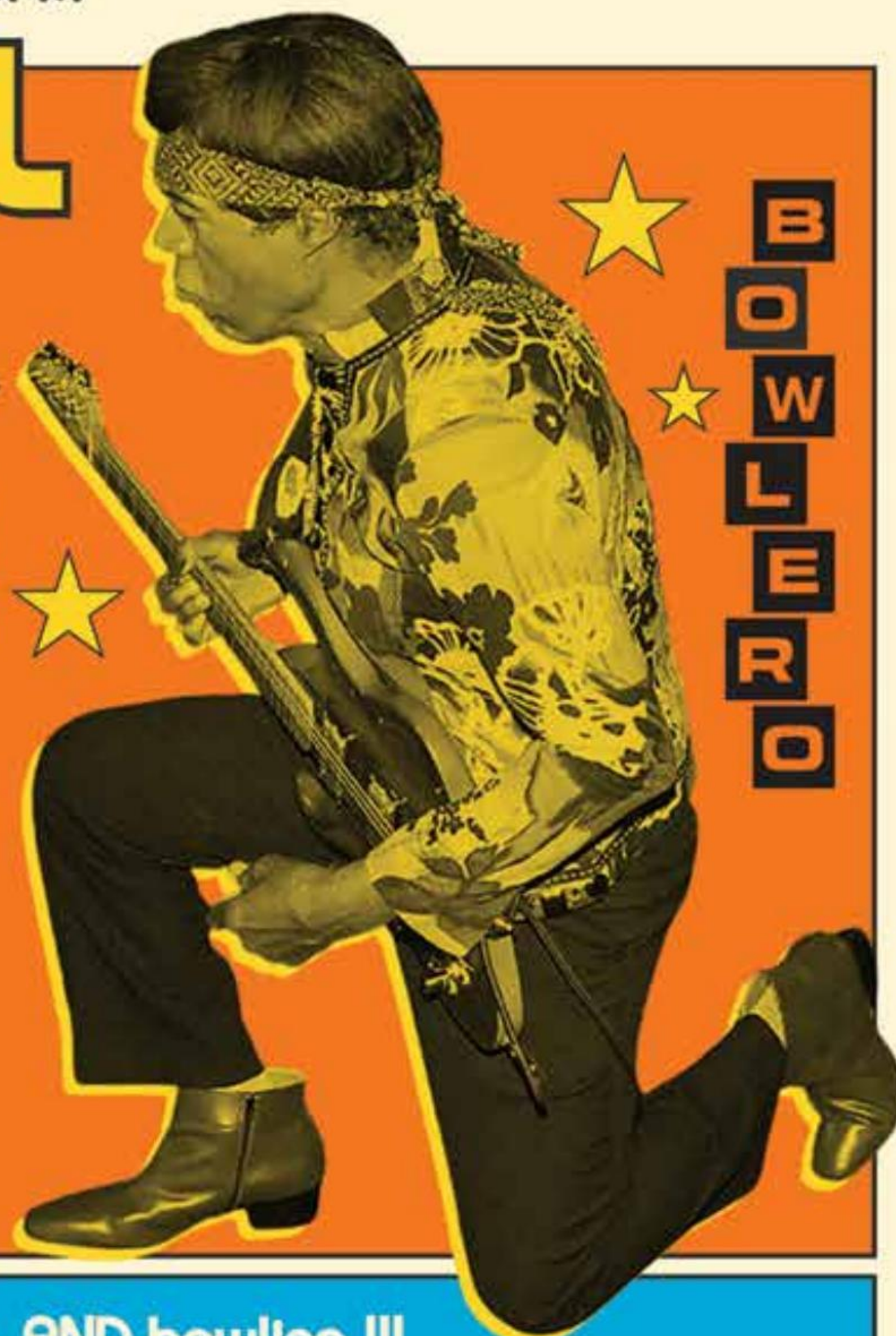
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Detroit spirit

NFL's Nate Burleson teams up with Ferndale's Valentine Distilling Co.

By Jim McFarlin

Network morning news co-anchor.

Sunday NFL Football analyst.

Nickelodeon kids' series host.

Primetime game show emcee.

And currently, filling in as anchor and zookeeper for NCAA March Madness men's basketball tournament coverage.

Dang, Nate Burleson, can another brutha get a TV job in America?

You may have recognized him as No. 13 at Ford Field, when he was snagging passes for the Detroit Lions from 2010-2014, but these days Burleson is virtually impossible to overlook. Few pro athletes have made the transition from playing career to media omnipresence as successfully as Burleson, who apparently has survived the current cuts at CBS News to return for a fifth year as cohost of *CBS Mornings*.

And to that long list of achievements, you can now add: Detroit signature vodka co-creator and endorser.

After nearly two years of testing and tasting, Burleson and Rifino Valentine, founder and president of Ferndale-based Valentine Distilling Co. LLC, have released the new, small-batch LionBlood Orange Vodka.

Burleson, 44, says he flew into Detroit at least six times over those years. "Not to do autograph signings, make money, or keep up with my boys," he explained last week in a phone conversation. "I would just meet with [Valentine], test the product, and figure out what flavor profiles we needed."

"Partnering with Nate was a natural fit because he shares our obsession with Detroit manufacturing," says Valentine, who founded his distillery in 2007. "We wanted LionBlood to be elegant, all natural and additive free, and Nate was hands on throughout this journey."

Burleson says he has been intrigued by a signature liquor brand since his days growing up in Seattle. "Seattle's always home," says the native Canadian, "and they had this Jimi Hendrix vodka. Jimi had roots in Seattle, and this brand came in a beautiful bottle with Jimi on the front. I bought it because it looked cool, and turned out it was very smooth."

"I was fascinated, because it was super successful in the Pacific Northwest, but when I traveled around the country, I didn't see it. That's when I

realized, 'Oh! Regional vodka!' Just like regional beers and whiskeys, they can be very successful."

Burleson wanted to make his spirits soar in Detroit. "But I was initially turned off due to some guys trying to rip me off," he recalls. "But it always bugged me that I never took a swing at it. Then a few years ago I decided, 'I'm gonna do it. I'm gonna do it in Detroit.' So I reached out to distilleries, and some of them were like, 'We don't see the vision.' Others said, 'Yeah, maybe we can do something, but it's going to cost you.'"

"But then I met Valentine, and he was like, 'Let me hear more about why you want to do this.' He was checking my temperature. 'Are you doing this because you just want to have a liquor brand, or because you love it?' Once we started talking, he realized how much research I had done, how I owned a restaurant when I was playing for the Seahawks and understood the liquor space."

"So he said, 'OK, the next question I have for you is: can you be involved?' I'm like, 'Listen: I'll be there for the marketing. I'll be the voice. I'll show up. I'll fly in.'"

Apparently, Nathaniel Burleson still holds a soft spot for the Motor City. "Man, when I was there, people were living under so many different circumstances," he remembers. "And the common theme between all of the folks I met, whether they were living in the lap of luxury or they were struggling, they just cared that the football players cared about being Lions. And when you gave that energy, they reciprocated it. That's why I love Detroit."

Burleson says LionBlood Orange Vodka is currently available in select metro Detroit grocery and liquor stores, and will soon be accessible outstate and in Illinois. "We're trying to grow from the inside out," he says.

"People ask me to pick a favorite between our Mayor Pingree bourbon, Liberator gin, and our vodkas," Valentine reflects. "Usually I say that's like picking a favorite child. But right now, LionBlood is making quite an argument for the top spot!"

However, it's hard to figure out when Burleson will find the time to get back here and help promote his brand.



Nate Burleson.

VALENTINE DISTILLING CO.

A typical workday at *CBS Mornings* has him up at 4 a.m., at the studio by 5, in makeup by 5:15 and on camera by 7 for two hours of live television every weekday, then constantly checking news headlines and social media so he won't be surprised the next morning. And while he's known as a "football guy," he says CBS Sports execs came to him to fill one of the anchor chairs for their coverage of March Madness.

"It's the first sport I fell in love with," he says. "So I love hoops. It's near and dear to not just my family, but also to me being a point guard in high school." Burleson's brother, Kevin, is an assistant coach with the Detroit Pistons.

When he first retired from football and began his media career, Burleson says he was so terrible at time management that stress led to him developing alopecia, losing his facial hair. "I was saying yes to everything, and the reality was it was a desperate attempt for people to see me as other than a football player," he relates. "In football they say the more you can do, the harder is to

get rid of you. I tried to use that same philosophy, and it wore me out."

He does gain some spare time as host of CBS's relaunched version of *Hollywood Squares*: all 21 prime-time episodes (8 p.m. Wednesdays, Channel 62) were filmed over seven days in Los Angeles last summer.

"It allows me to get into, I think, the most free spirited version of myself," he says. "In news it's hardcore coverage, but in hosting a game show I get to show all the levels."

"The writers help some of the celebrities with their jokes, but the first season they just had me reading the script straight up," says Burleson. "No jokes. No comebacks. So I put in a few funny lines of my own, and afterward one of the writers came to me and said, 'Don't be offended we didn't write jokes for you. We were told to focus on the celebrities. Second, you were really funny today, so we're gonna take credit for everything you said.' I can really be the fullest version of me on *Hollywood Squares*." **MT**



Directors Phil Lord and Christopher Miller wear their cinematic influences on their sleeves.

JONATHAN OLLEY

Film

A star is born

By Jared Rasic, Last Word Features

Project Hail Mary

Rated: PG-13

Run-time: 156 minutes

I had an epiphany while watching *Project Hail Mary*. Ryan Gosling could have played Marty in *Marty Supreme*, but Timothée Chalamet could never have played Ryland Grace in *Project Hail Mary*. There's an effortless charisma to what Gosling does here that feels like a future Best Actor nomination, without question. It's a movie star performance reminiscent of the kind we got with Tom Hanks in *Castaway* and Sam Rockwell in *Moon*, but with the slapstick physicality of Buster Keaton or Charlie Chaplin. It's a performance Gosling will be remembered for a hundred years from now.

He plays Grace, a molecular biologist whose infamous academic papers forced him into a career as a middle school science teacher. Told non-chronologically, the story follows Grace from his recruitment by the European Space Agency to his awakening from a coma aboard the *Hail Mary* with temporary amnesia. There, he discovers he is the sole survivor of a desperate suicide mission to save earth

from a rapidly dimming sun and an imminent ice age.

While the trailers for *Project Hail Mary* haven't been very shy about giving away quite a bit of the plot, it's still a blast watching as the film switches back and forth between Gosling on earth as he feverishly works out a way to save the planet and then jumps to him in space, wondering how and why he ended up there when he has absolutely zero training as an astronaut and even less inclination to be a hero.

This isn't much of a spoiler since it's central to the film's marketing, but Grace eventually meets a faceless, stone-appearing, spider-like alien he dubs Rocky, who is also trying to save "his" planet. While the film delivers an exciting space odyssey with massive stakes and stunning effects, its greatest success is as warm-hearted "competency porn" — deeply investing the audience in the friendship between Grace and Rocky.

What makes the film such an optimistic piece of sci-fi speculation isn't necessarily the budding friendship between human and alien, but rather that Grace is the ideal human being for first contact. Though initially frightened, Grace's love of science and knowledge

turns that fear into profound excitement. He immediately begins working with Rocky to save their respective civilizations. It's easy to imagine a version of this story (especially in our current political climate regarding science) where the astronaut freaks out at the sight of Rocky and shoots him like a bug in *Starship Troopers*.

Directors Phil Lord and Christopher Miller wear their cinematic influences on their sleeves with *Project Hail Mary*, at times aesthetically and tonally resembling sci-fi classics like *Interstellar*, *The Martian*, *Ad Astra*, *E.T.*, and *2001: A Space Odyssey*, without necessarily feeling beholden to any of them. I'm not science or mathematically minded enough to know whether the film is accurate with its astrophysics, but as a blockbuster sci-fi movie, it's transportive and charming and I am shocked at Lord and Miller's ability to make me care so deeply about an alien without anything recognizable as a face.

The film isn't perfect, as the non-chronological storytelling sometimes takes away from the tension and flow of the narrative. As we get deeper into the film's 156-minutes, every time we flash back to Baby Goose science-ing on earth, I just wanted to get

back to him and Rocky bro-ing out on the *Hail Mary*. Also, as lovely and immersive as I found several moments of Daniel Pemberton's otherworldly score, it also felt so omnipresent to wonder if Lord and Miller didn't trust audiences enough to let them sit in the silence of space with our heroes for a minute.

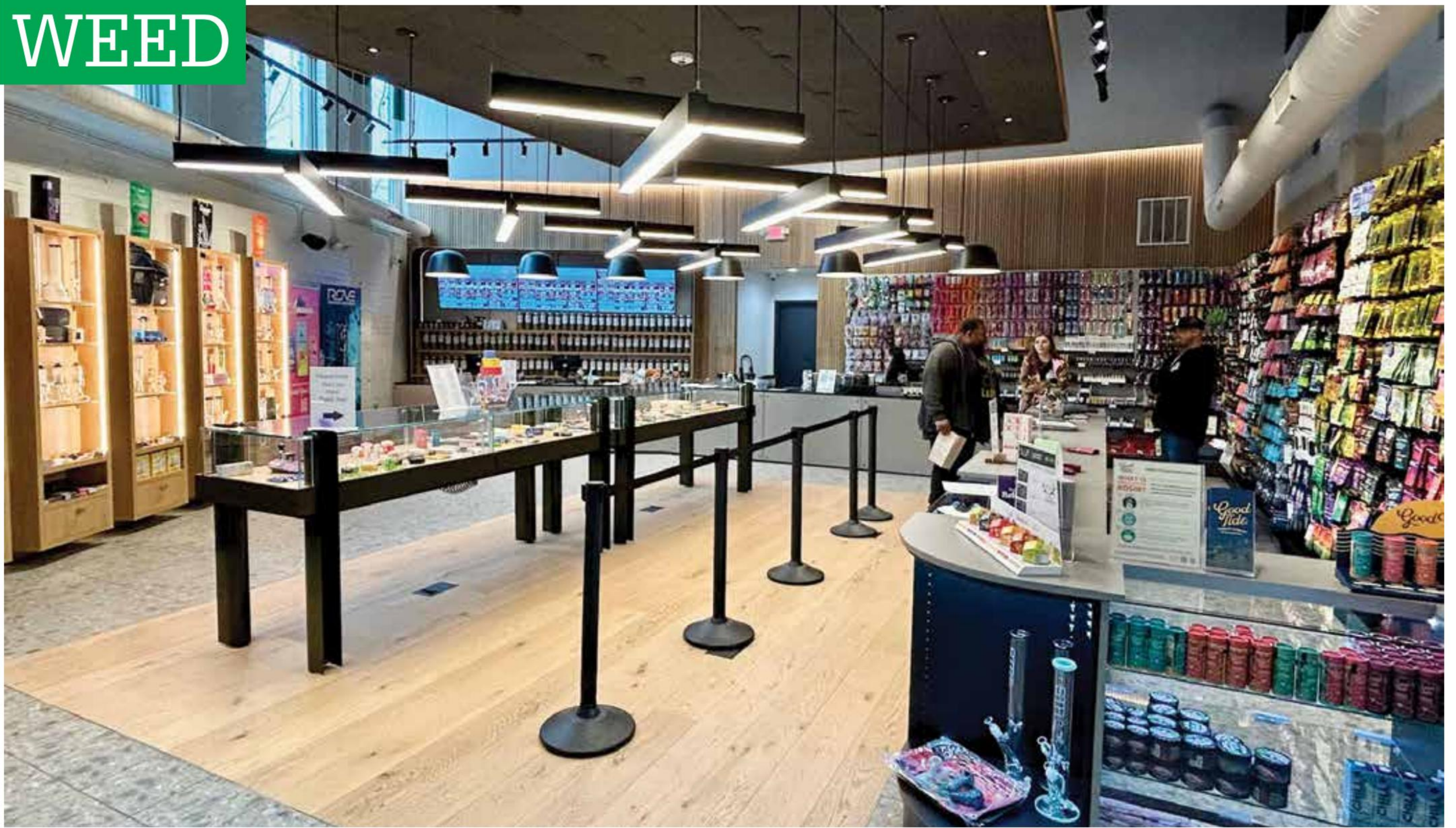
I haven't read Andy Weir's *Project Hail Mary* (despite enjoying *The Martian*), but my more literate companions called it "faithful to a fault." That tracks: you really do feel the entire two-and-a-half-hour runtime and the film has more endings than *Return of the King*, which seems more literary than cinematic. Still, in a sold-out IMAX auditorium with flawless projection and face-melting sound, I was once again reminded of the joys of watching movies on the big screen with an audience full of strangers. *Project Hail Mary* is one of those giant, crowd-pleasing event movies that justifies the existence of movie theaters by being so gorgeously lensed that it demands audiences see it on the biggest screen possible. The film's gentle and good-natured humanism feels like a balm in our current moment. Let's see if its brand of open-minded curiosity actually catches on. **MT**



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STEVE NEAVLING

The Straight Dope

These cannabis brands consistently deliver quality

By Steve Neavling

As Michigan's cannabis

market matures, it's getting easier to separate premium weed from everything else.

But for the average consumer, finding the right cannabis in a dispensary brimming with choices can be overwhelming. The quality ranges from pungent, properly cured flower to dry, flavorless buds that are no better than what was sold on the streets in the 1990s.

Unless you're spending a lot of money and staying on top of new strains, it's easy to fork over money for weed that looks better than it smokes.

After years of covering the industry and smoking, dabbing, and eating edibles, some cultivators and processors consistently rise above the hundreds of others.

These are 15 brands in Michigan that reliably deliver on flavor and effects.

Hytek

Hytek, the only Detroit cultivator on the list, has built a reputation for growing a wide range of flavorful, award-winning strains. The knowledgeable team focuses on terpene-rich flower and live rosin. With eighths of flower for as low as \$20

and prerolls for \$5 to \$8, Hytek is also one of the most affordable high-quality brands in Michigan.

In the past year, Hytek has dialed in its solventless process, creating some of the most flavorful rosin on the market.

The Hive

The Hive, a Hazel Park-based cultivator and dispensary, is a smaller operation that focuses on quality and freshness. Its flower lineup is constantly rotating, with a mix of energizing and relaxing strains, all grown in small batches. Its flower is only available at its dispensary, which has a warm and welcoming environment and is adjacent to B.D.T. smoke shop, an old-school head shop.

Local Grove

Local Grove is another metro Detroit favorite. The Harrison Township-based team has built a strong following in Michigan for both flower and live rosin, with a focus on strong terpene profiles and consistent quality. The brand regularly releases new strains, while maintaining a reliable core lineup. Its rosin, in particular, has become more refined and is now among the best in the state.

Information Entropy

Based in Ann Arbor, Information Entropy operates both cultivation and retail. Its flower is reliably fresh and flavorful, with a diverse range of strains and dialed-in genetics. The live rosin is equally as impressive and ranks among the top in the state. The brand has developed a loyal following and expanded its retail operations to New Buffalo.

Eastside Alchemy

A small, tight-knit operation based in Lansing, Eastside Alchemy focuses exclusively on live rosin, and it shows. Their lineup is constantly evolving, with steady drops of fresh, flavorful, and consistent rosin. The team is dedicated, experienced, and focused on the craft of premium cannabis.

Mi Loud

Jackson-based Mi Loud remains one of the most respected cultivators in Michigan, known for its potent, terpene-heavy flower. While the brand built its name on gassy, fuel-forward strains, it has expanded into sweeter profiles in recent releases. Mi Loud also began producing live rosin, and the

team hit the ground running.

Tip Top Crop

Hazel Park-based Tip Top Crop really knows how to grow pungent, premium flower. The team has refined its genetics and growing techniques, producing some of the best weed in Michigan. It's no surprise Tip Top Crop has won numerous awards for its strains, like Cosmic Runtz, Z Marker, Space Guavaz, and Z Lato.

Premier Cannabis Farms

Premier Cannabis Farms, often called "517," is a family-owned cultivator that has a reputation for producing flavorful, well-grown flower. Based in Lansing, the small operation focuses on potent, terpene-rich flower. Premier's lineup includes its take on classic profiles, like 517 Headband and Spartan OG, and fruitier, candy-forward crosses like Zlemonade and Verde Limon Sherbert.

Known

Traverse City-based Known is a small-batch live rosin maker that invests in genetics and is always on the hunt "for the rare, the exceptional, and the next best

thing.” The small team of connoisseurs has earned a reputation for clean, flavorful rosin. Its rosin is consistently smooth and terpene-rich, and many of the strains, like Traverse Cherry Rootbeer, are unique. Known also collaborates with other premium flower cultivators.

Growing Pains

Growing Pains, based in Paw Paw, has become one of the most reliable cultivators in the state. Known for strong flavor profiles and award-winning strains, the team has built a loyal following. Its Honey Banana flower, which smells and tastes like banana bread stuffed with strawberries and honey and a dash of tea, dominated the 2025 Zalympix, a high-profile competition often dubbed the “Grammys of Cannabis.” Their flower and live rosin are consistently spot on and not as expensive as other high-quality cannabis.

Wojo

Wojo has earned a reputation as one of Michigan's most respected live rosin producers, with an ever-expanding lineup of strains. The Pinconning-based brand consistently releases supple, flavorful rosin that is divided into five categories: candy, citrus, floral, funky, and gassy. Sold in one-gram pucks and vapes, Wojo's rosin is reasonably priced and available at many dispensaries across the state.

Exotic Matter

Exotic Matter is a small-scale cultivator that produces some of the best and most affordable flower and live rosin in the state. The team has gone from growing medical cannabis in a pole barn in Michigan to commanding a strong customer base in the recreational market. Its lineup is broad, with a mix of fruity, funky, and candy profiles.

710 Labs

A national name with a strong Michigan presence, 710 Labs is widely known for top-tier live rosin and premium flower. The brand emphasizes small-batch production, first-press rosin, and carefully selected genetics. Its products are often among the most expensive on the shelf, but they tend to deliver on flavor and effects.

Michigrown

Muskegon-based Michigrown has one of the deepest strain libraries in the state, with a steady rotation of genetics. The brand is known for producing large, resinous buds and maintaining consistency across batches. Its wide selection makes it easy to find what you're looking for, even if a specific strain is unavailable. Michigrown recently teamed up with Known to produce a new drop of live rosin, and the collaboration nailed it.

Peninsula Gardens

Peninsula Gardens is one of the most popular cultivators in Michigan because its flower is consistently flavorful and potent. Based in Lake Orion, the brand produces aromatic, well-grown buds covered in trichomes. The team doesn't drop new strains until they're dialed in and ready to impress.

The easiest way to find good cannabis in Michigan isn't chasing high THC percentages or flashy packaging. It's discovering the cultivators that put quality above everything else.

Start with these brands, and you're far more likely to end up with something fresh, flavorful, and worth your money. **MT**



Growing Pains is one of Michigan's most reputable cannabis brands. STEVE NEAVLING

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Savage Love

Much Obligated

by Dan Savage

Q: I'm a happily married pregnant woman. My wife and I have had a bit of a slowdown in the sex department, but nothing too worrying considering my "condition." During this pregnancy I've had an increase in libido, but I haven't shared that with her.

We were having some conflict when the uptick in sexual impulses started. I've had some limitations physically, like a period of mandated pelvic rest, so "The Right Moment" has been rare. When our dry spell came up a few months ago, neither of us handled the discussion well. I was being flirtatious (or I thought) and she chose that moment to say something hurtful about how infrequently we were having sex. I don't like feeling as though sex is an obligation, so that interaction was a big turn-off for me. I told her I felt hurt, and she apologized, but I don't think I was clear that this had long-term implications, like I would be wary of trying to initiate again and be on high alert for feeling pressured.

I've had more sexual fantasies than usual since then and I've been watching more porn. I've watched a lot of videos that are about degrading the women involved — maybe because I stick to the free stuff — and I don't feel great about the content I'm watching, which generally features big dicks and small women. I don't believe there's anything exactly ethically wrong here, as we're both totally supportive of private self-pleasure within the context of our monogamous marriage. But I've gone down this weird rabbit hole where what's turning me on is watching someone get used for sex or be overpowered or overwhelmed in some way.

The reason I'm writing is that it feels like I've created distance between us by not sharing that I've been kind of hypersexual for the last three months. But I don't want the conversation to bring up "shoulds" about our sex life or to increase expectations of how much sex we're going to have. I would like this to translate into an opportunity for us rather than a further disconnect. Also, the kind of porn I'm watching does not reflect our erotic dynamic at all. I'm enjoying watching someone pushing someone else's boundaries but being on the receiving end of that

treatment would not be hot for me. And big dicks (fake or otherwise) are not a part of our bedroom play — they are particularly off limits for her — and I wouldn't want them to be.

Is there a way for me to harness this sexual energy and involve my wife? Being secretive is distasteful to me. Do I try to explain the fantasy storylines when I don't think it will really work for us? I'm also aware that we have an impending deadline where our lives are about to change. Is it even worth the bother of bringing her into it now?

—Bringing Up Misogynist Pleasures

A: Isn't sex — in the context of a committed, long-term, monogamous relationship — something of an obligation?

Like mortgages, obligations aren't sexy to think about, BUMP, and no one wants to be reminded of an overdue mortgage payment right before they fuck. But aren't two people who've made a monogamous commitment — like the one you and your wife made — obligated to meet each other's reasonable sexual needs?

Now, no one is obligated to make themselves sexually available to a spouse at all times — a monogamous commitment is not a "free use" kink contract (for the record: kink "contracts" are legally unenforceable dirty talk) — and every couple is going to have dry spells and sulking is never sexy and sometimes a married person has to take care of themselves. But if your wife can only come to you for sex and vice-versa, BUMP, aren't you obligated to meet each other's reasonable sexual needs at reasonable intervals? Isn't that part of the deal? (Sexual exclusivity in the absence of sexual activity is celibacy, not monogamy.)

My husband and I have been in an open marriage for more than two decades — it's been fun reading all week about how polyamorous relationships like ours never work out — and while he doesn't rely on me to meet all his sexual needs and vice-versa, I nevertheless feel obligated to meet his needs myself and/or make sure he has the space and time to get his sexual needs met elsewhere. And when we were monogamous, BUMP, which we were for the first four years we were together, I felt personally obligated (in a sexy way!) to meet as many of his sexual needs as I possibly could. ("If not me, who? If not now, honey, maybe tomorrow night? And would you like a handjob to tide you over until tomorrow?")

Anyway, BUMP, it's been months since your wife derailed "The Right Moment" by saying "The Wrong Thing" — my husband says the wrong

thing to me twice before breakfast — and what she said was shitty and thoughtless. But I worry you're more invested in punishing your wife than you are in getting past this, BUMP, even if punishing her does lasting damage to sexual connection and thus your marriage. Instead of giving her the benefit of the doubt and rounding that thoughtless comment up to "Compliment In Shit Disguise" (your wife is still attracted to you! she still desires you! she's missed having sex with you!), you're rounding that thoughtless comment down to "Interaction That Ruined Everything."

So, I think you need to ask yourself, BUMP, if you've stopped initiating sex with your wife because you just can't anymore — not after the interaction that ruined everything — or if you've made up your mind to stop initiating sex with your wife to punish her. You also need to ask yourself whether you're on "high alert" for feeling pressured because you were so traumatized by your wife's insensitivity (you were on mandatory pelvic rest!), BUMP, or if you're choosing to interpret any expression of sexual desire on her part as "pressure" so you can withhold sex from your wife — sex you would also like to be having — in order to make the "longer term implications" clear to her. If the answer to both questions is yes, BUMP, then you're not just punishing your wife by refusing to initiate and shutting down when you feel pressured, you're punishing yourself.

Moving on to your actual question: Should you share the fantasies you're currently having (and the porn you're currently consuming) with your wife?

No.

Seeing as your current fantasies might be the sexual equivalent of cravings for weird food combos that'll end once you give birth, there's no reason to share your fantasies with your wife right now. Even if these sexual fantasies persist after the birth of your child, you aren't obligated to share every sexual fantasy you have with your spouse, BUMP, especially fantasies you know your spouse doesn't share and that could make her feel insecure or inadequate. My advice would be different if you thought your wife might share your fantasies, BUMP, but seeing as dicks — big and small, real and silicone — are a turn-off for your wife, I think you should keep your fantasies about dick-and-degradation to yourself, especially since they may be fleeting.

So, what do you say to your wife now? How about this: "I'm sorry I've let this drag on so long — fact is, I've been desperately horny for months, but I've been sulking since the last

time we tried to fuck around. In that moment, you seemed to forget the real reason we hadn't been having sex: I'm pregnant, as you know, and I was on mandatory pelvic rest for a while. But it's a good sign that you missed sex so much you were frustrated, even if you expressed your frustration poorly. How about we make a deal: You apologize to me one more time — I just need to hear it again — and I will stop being paranoid about sex being a 'should.' We absolutely should be having sex, honey, especially right now because having it after the baby comes is going to be a lot harder. Now, get over here and sit on my face."

P.S. No one is obligated to fuck a spouse who is emotionally or physically abusive — an emotionally or physically abusive spouse should get left, not laid — and someone who neglects their personal hygiene or who is sexually lazy or sexually selfish or who doesn't do their fair share of the household labor has no one to blame but themselves for their sexless lives.

Q: My husband and I have been together for more than twenty years. He is a hung manly Marlboro man type top and I'm a sub kind of daddy bottom. We're both in pretty good shape, tatted up, we have a great life together, we're still in love, etc. But we haven't had sex together for a very long time. I have always stepped out for anon sex on weekdays with different guys from Sniffies or Grindr, while he got himself off sexting with guys he never met up with. But he has developed a thing with a guy he met on Scruff and made plans to meet this guy on a Sunday afternoon soon. Nights and weekends are supposed to be our time as a couple, and I find myself feeling upset and jealous. I don't have a leg to stand on here, since I have a lot of sex during "work hours," and I feel like I shouldn't judge him for this. Who am I to judge him when I'm getting fucked as often as I can? But I have no emotional connection to any of the men who fuck me whereas he seems kind of infatuated with his new guy. I feel like the trust is kind of gone and I don't know what to do.

—Sunday Plans Upending Marital Equilibrium

A: If by "the trust is gone" you mean is "I can no longer trust my husband to jerk off alone in front of his laptop while I'm getting my ass fucked five days a week," then yes, SPUME, the trust is gone. But declaring trust dead seems a little a little dramatic. I mean, your husband came to you and asked for permission before meeting up with this guy from Scruff. And I don't think you can reasonably deny him your blessing to go fuck this guy, SPUME, even if it means sacrificing a Sunday.

Zooming out for a second: While anonymous sex works for you — anon turns you on and meets your needs — it doesn't work for your husband. While you can be sexual with strangers and feel nothing before or after (save anticipation and hopefully gratitude), your husband isn't wired the same way. He needs a connection, SPUME, and while it was enough for your husband to connect with men he met online for cybersex — and for all you know he may have been infatuated with some of those men (people have fallen in love online) — now he wants to meet up with someone in person. And I don't see how you could possibly deny your husband permission to have actual sex with an actual man after all the actual sex you've had with actual men.

That said, there is a category difference here: You don't make personal connections with the guys you fuck, and your husband seems to have made one with this guy already. You're entitled to your feelings, SPUME, and that includes feelings of insecurity. And while you and your husband have released each other from any obligation to meet each other's sexual needs, you are obligated — still and always — to meet each other's emotional needs. So, if you're feeling insecure, SPUME, your husband is obliged to offer you reassurance. All he can offer you in advance of this sex date are his words ("I still love you, I'm not going anywhere"), SPUME, but after he hooks up with this guy he can reassure you with actions (coming home, loving you, not going anywhere).

P.S. Men have fallen in love with men they initially met up with for anonymous sex. (I personally know two guys who met their future husbands during an anonymous sexual encounter. It happens!) So, while your odds of falling for any one of your anon hookups may have been low, SPUME, they were never zero. And while I'm no statistician, I'd say the risk your husband has tolerated over the years — the cumulative risk of your many anonymous weekday hookups — may be greater than the risk your husband is asking you to tolerate in the form of this one guy he met on Scruff and would like to fuck in person. **MT**

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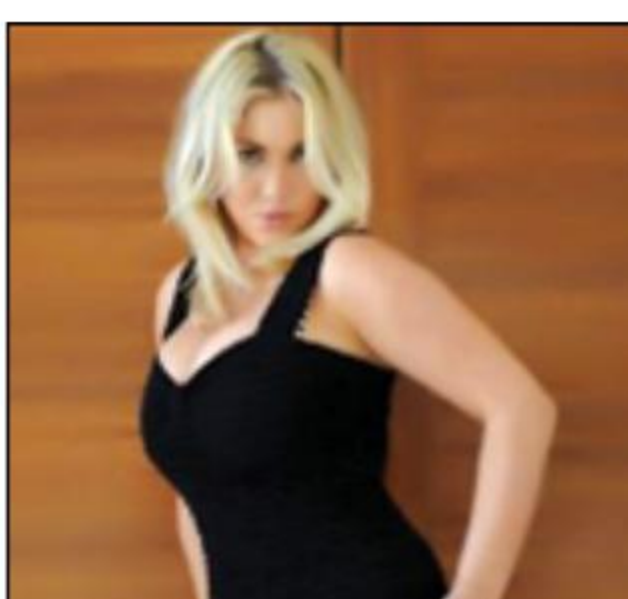
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Free Will Astrology

By Rob Breznsky

♈ ARIES: March 21 – April 19
Now is an excellent time to decide your favorite color is amaranth (a vivid red-violet), or sinopia (earthy red-orange), or viridian (cool blue-green, darker than jade). You might also conclude that your favorite aroma is agarwood (deep, smoky, resin-soaked wood), or heliotrope (cherry-almond vanilla), or petrichor (wet soil after a rain). I'm trying to tell you, Aries, that you're primed to deeply enhance your detailed delight in smells, colors, tastes, feelings, physical sensations, types of wind, tones of voice, qualities of light—and everything else. Indulge in sensory and sensual pleasures!

♉ TAURUS: April 20 – May 20
My Taurus friend Elena keeps a “gratitude garden” in her backyard. When she feels grateful for a specific joy in her life, she writes it on biodegradable paper and buries it among her flowers, herbs, and vegetables. “I feed the earth with appreciation,” she says. “Returning the gift.” She feels this practice ensures that her garden and her life flourish. Her devoted attention to recognizing blessings attracts even more blessings. Her cultivated appreciation for beauty and abundance leads her to discover more beauty and abundance. Elena's approach is pure Taurean genius. I invite you to create your own rituals for expressing your thankful love. Not just paying dutiful homage in your thoughts, but giving your appreciation weight, texture, and presence in the actual world.

♊ GEMINI: May 21 – June 20
Many of us periodically slip into the daydream that everything would finally feel right if only our lives were somehow different. If we're single, maybe we imagine we ought to be partnered; if we're partnered, we wish our beloved would change, or we secretly wonder about someone else entirely. That's the snag. The blessing is this: In the days ahead, you're likely to discover a surprising ease with your life exactly as it is, and feel a genuine, grounded peace. Congratulations in advance!

♋ CANCER: June 21 – July 22
A cautious voice in your head murmurs: “Proceed carefully. Don't be overly impressed with your own beauty. Stick with dependable methods. Live up

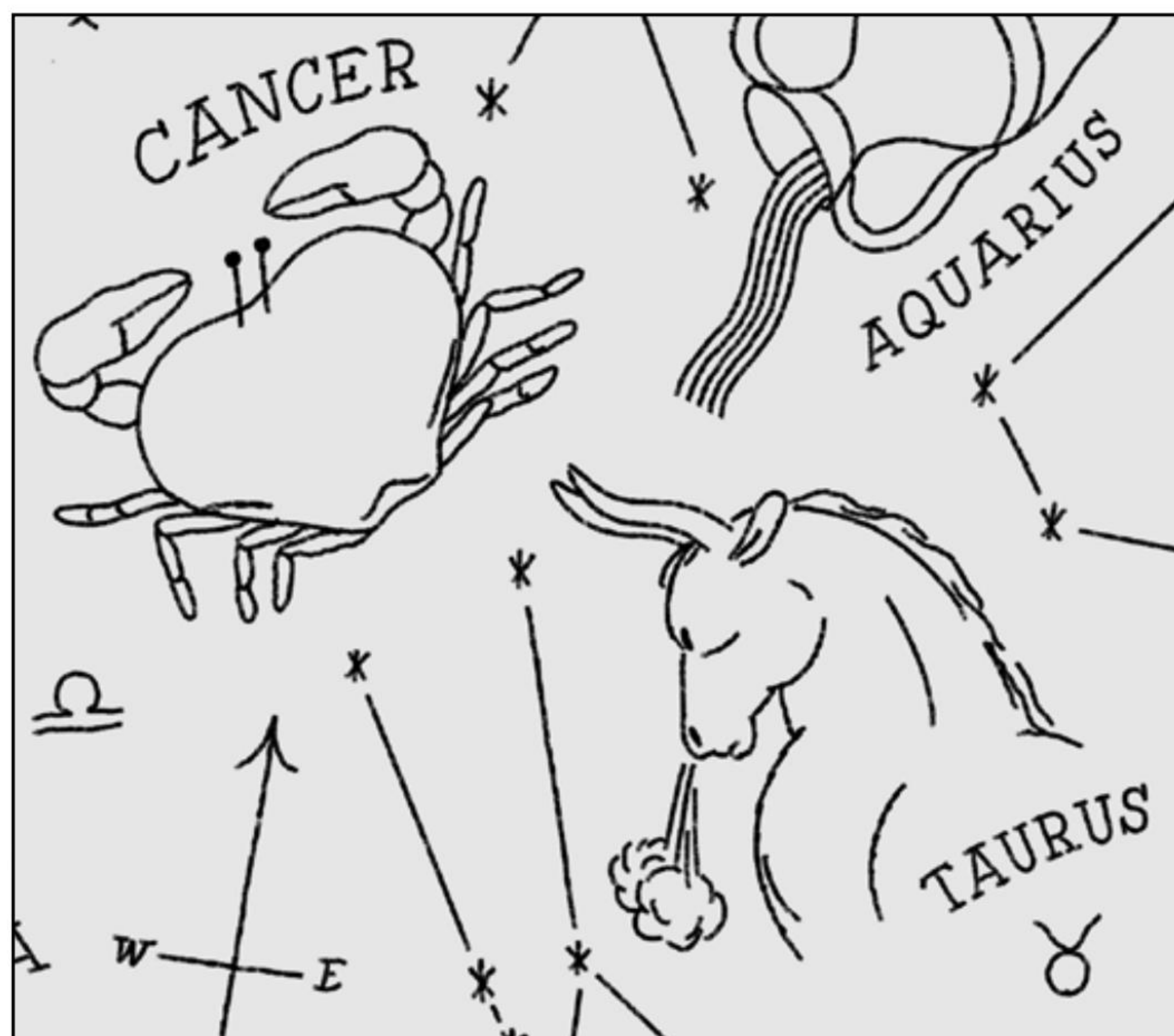
to expectations and avoid explorations into the unknown.” Your bold genius interrupts: “Tell that fussy, boring voice to shut up. The truth is that you have earned the right to be an inquisitive wanderer, an ingenious lover, a fanciful storyteller, and a laughing experimenter.”

♌ LEO: July 23 – August 22
In medieval European gardens, there was a tradition of creating “pleasure labyrinths.” They were walking meditations that spiraled inward to a center, then back out again. There were no decisions and no wrong turns, just the relaxing, meditative journey itself. I think you need and deserve a metaphorical pleasure labyrinth right now, Leo. You've been treating every choice as a high-stakes dilemma and every path as potentially problematic. But what if the current phase isn't about making the perfect decision? Maybe it's about trusting that the path you're on will take you where you need to go, even if it meanders. By cosmic decree, you are excused from second-guessing every turn.

♍ VIRGO: August 23 – Sept. 22
Your eye for imperfection is a gift until it becomes the lens through which you see everything. The critical faculty that drives you to refine and enhance may also shunt you into a dead end of never-being-good-enough, where impossible standards immobilize you. In the coming weeks, dear Virgo, I beg you to use your vaunted discernment primarily in the service of growth and pleasure rather than constraint. Be excited by buoyant analysis that empowers constructive change. Homework: For every flaw you identify, identify two things that are working well. You won't ignore what needs attention, but instead will compensate for the excessive criticism that sometimes grips your inner critic.

♎ LIBRA: Sept. 23 – Oct. 22
You Libras shouldn't expend excessive effort trying to force the external world to be more tranquil. That's mostly a futile task that distracts from your more essential work. The secret to your happiness is to cultivate serenity within. How do you do that? One reliable way to shed tension is to continually place yourself in the presence of beauty. Nothing makes you relax better than being surrounded by elegance, grace, and loveliness. Now is a good time to recommit yourself to this key practice.

♏ SCORPIO: Oct. 23 – Nov. 21
In computer science, there's a concept called “graceful degradation.” When a system encounters an error, it doesn't crash completely. It loses some functionality but keeps running with what remains. According to my reading of the astrological omens, Scorpio, you'd be



JAMES NOELLERT

wise to acknowledge a graceful degradation like that. Something isn't working as you had hoped and planned. A relationship? Project? Adventure? In classic Scorpio fashion, you're tempted to burn it all down. But I encourage you to practice graceful degradation instead. Keep what still works and release only what's actually broken. Not everything has to be all-or-nothing. You can lose some functionality and still run. You can be partially out of whack and still be valuable. PS: The awkwardness is temporary.

♐ SAGITTARIUS: Nov. 22 – Dec. 21
At your best and brightest, you are a hunter—though not the kind who stalks prey with weapons and trophies in mind. Your hunt is noble: the fervent pursuit of adventures that nourish your curiosity and the brave forays you make into unfamiliar territories where intriguing new truths shimmer. And now, as the world drifts deeper into chaos, you are called to respond with even more exploratory audacity. I invite you to further refine your hunter's craft. Lift it up to an even higher, more luminous form of seeking.

♑ CAPRICORN: Dec. 22 – Jan. 19
Capricorn meditation teacher Wes Nisker guided his students to relax the relentless mental static that muddled their awareness. But he also understood that excessive striving can sabotage the peace we're seeking. I invoke his influence now to help you release some of the jittery goal-obsession you've been gripped by. Nisker and I offer you permission to temporarily suspend the potentially exhausting drive to constantly be better and more accomplished. Instead, just for now, simply be your authentic self. Loosen your high-strung grip on self-im-

provement and allow yourself the radical luxury of purposelessness.

♒ AQUARIUS: Jan. 20 – Feb. 18
Here's a danger you Aquarians are sometimes prey to: spending so much energy fixing the big picture that you neglect what's up close and personal. You may get so involved in rearranging systems that immediate concerns get less than your best attention. I hope you won't do that in the coming weeks. Your aptitude for overarching objectivity is a gift because it enables you to recognize patterns others can't detect. But it may also divert you from the messy, intricate intimacy that gritty transformation requires. Your assignment: Eagerly attend to the details, which I bet will be more interesting than you imagine.

♓ PISCES: Feb. 19 – March 20
In horticulture, “hardening off” is the process of gradually exposing seedlings started indoors to outdoor conditions before transplanting them. Too much exposure too fast will shock them; no exposure at all will leave them unprepared. Let's invoke this as a useful metaphor for you. I believe you are being hardened off, Pisces. Life is making small, increasing demands on your tender self. Though this may sometimes feel uncomfortable, I assure you that it's preparation, not cruelty. You're being readied for a shift from protected space to open ground. My advice is twofold: 1. Don't retreat back into the ultra-safe greenhouse. 2. Don't let yourself be thrown into full exposure all at once.

Homework: What message will you send the person you'll be in 3 years? **MT**

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